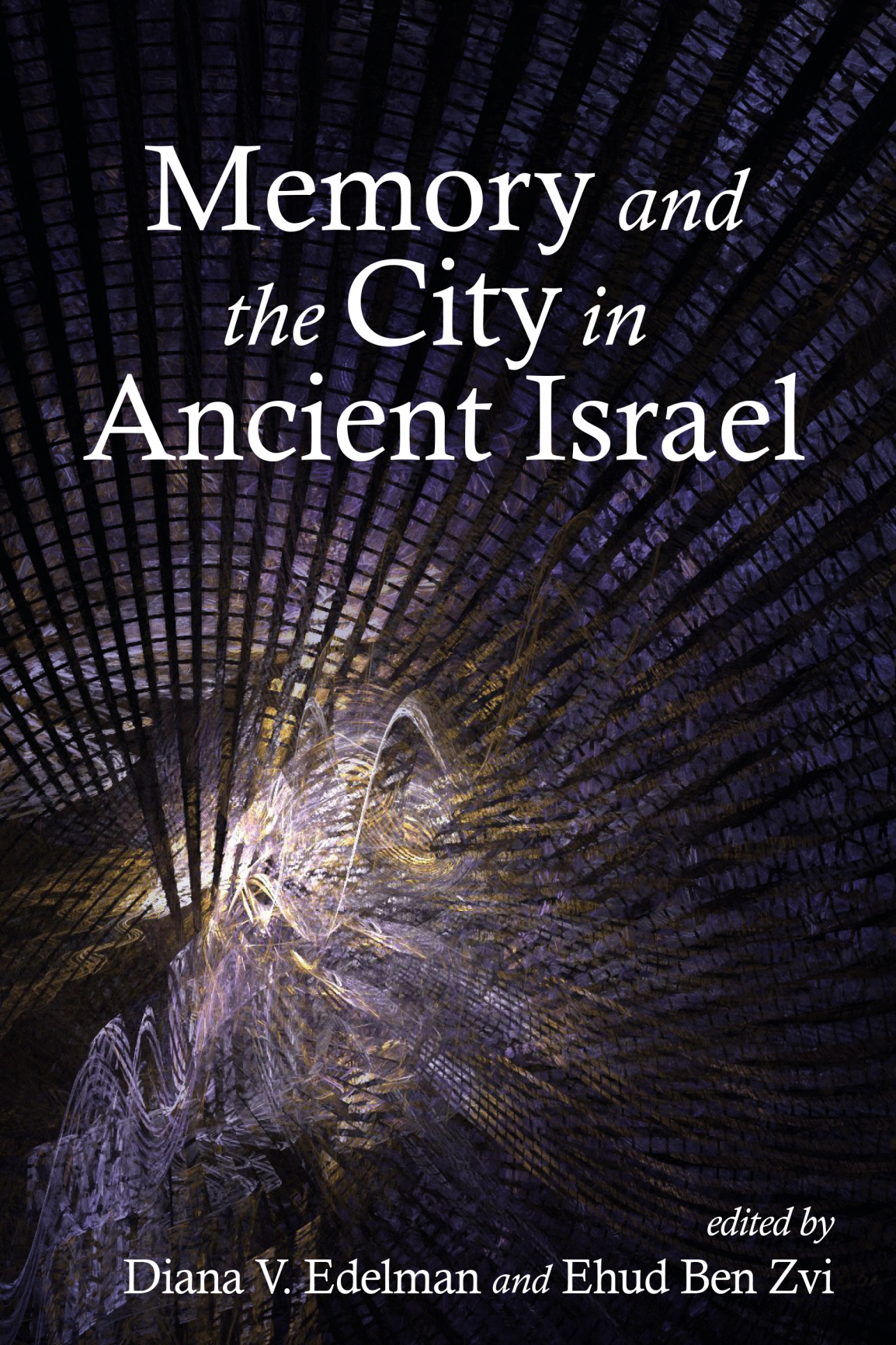




Memory *and* *the* City in Ancient Israel

edited by
Diana V. Edelman *and* Ehud Ben Zvi

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MEMORY AND THE CITY
IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

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EDITED BY
DIANA V. EDELMAN AND EHUD BEN ZVI

Winona Lake, Indiana
EISENBRAUNS
2014

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Printed in the United States of America.

www.eisenbrauns.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Memory and the city in ancient Israel / edited by Diana V. Edelman and
Ehud Ben Zvi.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-57506-315-7 (paperback : alkaline paper)

1. Cities and towns, Ancient—Palestine. 2. Palestine—
Civilization—To 1500 3. Civilization, Ancient—Palestine. 4. City
planning—Palestine—History—To 1500. 5. City planning—Social
aspects—Palestine—History—To 1500. 6. Public spaces—
Palestine—History—To 1500. I. Edelman, Diana Vikander, 1954–
editor. II. Ben Zvi, Ehud, 1951– editor.

HT147.P27M46 2014

307.76095694—dc23

2014036051

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984. TM©

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Abbreviations

General

BM	tablets in the collections of the British Museum
CTMMA	Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
TH	Ziegler's text of Theodotion

Reference Works

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N., editor. <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992
ABC	Grayson, A. Kirk. <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000. Reprint of Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5. Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1975.
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Brown, F.; Driver, S. R.; and Briggs, C. A. <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1907
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibIntS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BM	<i>Beit Mikra</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	Oppenheim, A. L., et al., editors. <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . 21 vols. (A–Z). Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2011
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
Cowley	Cowley, A. E. <i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century b.c.</i> Oxford, 1923
CritInq	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
EncJud	Roth, Cecil, editor. <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem: Keter, 1972

<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, L.; Baumgartner, W.; and Stamm, J. J. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000
HANEM	History of the Ancient Near East Monographs
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>KAI</i>	Donner, H., and Röllig, W. <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962–64
KTU	Dietrich, M.; Loretz, O.; and Sanmartín, J., editors. <i>Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> . Alter Orient und Altes Testament 24. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
MACO	Monografías sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente
<i>MDOG</i>	<i>Mitteilungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</i>
<i>NABU</i>	<i>Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>PHSC</i>	<i>Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature Series
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>TAD</i>	<i>Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	Botterweck, G. J., and Ringgren, H., editors. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–2006

TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae
UBL	Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>VF</i>	<i>Verkündigung und Forschung</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

PART 1
OPENING THE GATES

An Introduction and Invitation to Join the Conversation about Cities and Memory

EHUD BEN ZVI

University of Alberta

Ancient cities served as the actual, worldly landscape populated by “material” sites of memory. Some of these sites were personal and others were directly and intentionally involved in the shaping of a collective social memory, such as palaces, temples, inscriptions, walls, and gates. Many cities were also sites of social memory in a very different way. Like Babylon, Nineveh, or Jerusalem, they served as ciphers that activated and communicated various mnemonic worlds as they integrated multiple images, remembered events, and provided a variety of meanings in diverse ancient communities. This volume emerged out of the sessions and inspiring conversations devoted to the theme “Cities as Sites of Memory in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Period” that the EABS research group “Israel and the Production and Reception of Authoritative Books in the Persian and Hellenistic Period” organized in 2011 and 2012.¹ Additional contributors, as suggested in the mentioned conversations, were sought in 2013. The sessions addressed questions, such as what kinds of memories were evoked by specific cities or by their palaces, domestic spaces, walls, cisterns, threshing floors, and the like? In which ways did these memories affect the social mindscape of the community?

Memory-studies approaches and insights are beginning to make inroads in studies of ancient Israelite history and literature but are still “new” to many scholars, including readers of this volume. Following the approach of

1. As we all know, the term *ancient Israel*, which appears in the title of the book, may be understood in more than way, because there were several “ancient” Israels. Clearly in this particular case, we are referring to the “ancient Israel” that imagined, remembered, and identified with (main contours of) the “Israel” constructed through, shaped in and evoked by reading and rereading a particular repertoire of books. A core, defining feature of this repertoire is that the present forms—note the plural—of the majority of the books that eventually ended up in the Hebrew Bible provide a significantly representative sample of its main contours. In other words, we might say that this historical “ancient Israel” consists of those who saw themselves as one temporal manifestation of the transtemporal “biblical” Israel that they themselves conceptualized. The editors, as many others in the field, date this “ancient Israel” and the ideological/theological “Israel” they identified with to the late Persian / early Hellenistic period.

the research group, the authors included in this volume were encouraged to walk their *own* journeys, and each took her or his own path. The result is a thought-provoking conversation and a kaleidoscope. The aim of this volume is to bring this sort of conversation to the readers with the hope they will join it, through their own works and in their own voices.

As mentioned by Anne Katrine Gudme in her contribution, “texts are the mnemonic media par excellence” and “literature is culture’s memory.”² This volume focuses in the main, but not exclusively, on memories and sites of memory as shaped, reflected, and encoded in books that eventually became part of the Hebrew Bible (hereafter and for simplicity only, the HB). The reason for this choice is that, from the perspective of a community in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period, these texts evoked (and represented) core aspects of the social (or cultural) memory of the community that read and reread them in the early Second Temple period (mid-late Persian to early Hellenistic periods). This said, and as several of the contributors of this volume have underscored, physical places, whether standing or in ruins, tend to show a strong generative role in the creation of memories. There is room for a complementary volume that focuses primarily on city, memory, and archaeology and even for a third to provide a multidimensional perspective on these issues. The editors would welcome volumes such as these and be delighted if the present work spurs their production and continues the conversations advanced here.

This volume is divided in three separate though partially overlapping sections. The first, “Opening the Gates,” includes this introduction to the volume and the chapter by Stéphanie Anthonioz, “Cities of Glory and Cities of Pride: Concepts, Gender and Images of Cities in Mesopotamia and in Ancient Israel,” in which she compares basic conceptualizing tendencies concerning cities in two areas of the ancient Near East: Mesopotamia and Judah/Israel. She then addresses the genderization of cities and the ways in which it may have or may not have had an impact on the shaping of images and memories of both individual cities and urban places and spaces.³ The second section, “Crossing the Gates and Entering into the City (of Memory),” explores memories of urban or urban-related places and spaces such as palaces, gardens, gates, threshing floors, cisterns and wells, and domestic spaces as well as the social roles of some of these memories within the community whose authoritative repertoire of texts included the former. In other words, this section is about some places and spaces, imagined and remembered, as characteristics of urban centers. The

2. See p. 62 and Renate Lachmann, “Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 301–10 (quoting p. 301).

3. Contemporary approaches to the interrelated concepts “place” and “space” are strongly informed directly or indirectly by Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

third section explores particular cities as sites of memory and the communal memories evoked by individual cities. There is a certain overlap between the sections, particularly given the central role of Jerusalem in the discourse of the relevant communities and the fact that any discussion of memories of places and spaces in cities of old represented in read and reread texts cannot but evoke memories of the particular cities.

As per the established genre of introductions to collected essays, I will draw attention in the following paragraphs to some aspects of the essays included in the volume as a service to the readers of this introduction and with the hope of enticing them to read carefully the relevant chapter and the collection as a whole. It is not feasible in any way to do justice the complex issues, detailed discussions, and methodological considerations and debates addressed in these chapters. Nor does the genre itself allow it. Much is left unsaid, but hopefully, what is said here will encourage readers to join all the contributors, including the editors, in their journey to explore the multiple aspects of “The City and Social Memory,” primarily in the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods in Judah/Yehud.

The chapter by Stéphanie Anthonioz, “Cities of Glory and Cities of Pride: Concepts, Gender and Images of Cities in Mesopotamia and in Ancient Israel,” opens the gates of our conversation about cities and memory. As mentioned above, she compares basic conceptualizing tendencies concerning cities in two areas of the ancient Near East: Mesopotamia and Judah/Israel. Anthonioz addresses, among other things, issues concerning their deification (or lack thereof), their human or divine origins, their participation in discourses about royal glorification, and the personification and female genderization of cities and the ways in which this genderization may or may not influence memories about the cities. To address these matters, Anthonioz discusses the ways in which cities were imagined, evoked, and remembered, as evidenced by the appropriate literary and ideological corpora. Among the positions she advances in her essay are (a) “no single gendered image of cities emerges in ancient Mesopotamia”; (b) in Mesopotamia, cities were conceptualized according to both divine and royal ideology; (c) the corpus of texts that eventually became included in the HB attests a more complex and ambivalent attitude, involving positive and negative imagery and memories; in these texts, cities “human creations, not divine in origin”; (d) “whenever . . . notices [of, for example, construction or fortification of cities] are reduced to mere information without glorifying rhetoric, the writers are critiquing and implicitly condemning the king in question”; (e) personification, including feminization, is most effective when the role not only is assigned to the city but also played; and (f) the city of Jerusalem stands apart in that process of personification and metaphorization. Images of the city within the repertoire seem to shape a woman’s life narrative from a “young woman who becomes a rebel and prostitute, who is rejected and

despised, widowed and bereaved, before she is chosen again and espoused, as though some divine pedagogy is at work regarding the chosen city. . . . [Jerusalem is remembered] as a character who experiences pain and sorrow but also joy as her 'life' unfolds." Moreover, "this seems to constitute the very core of the process of memorialization"; no other city is so memorialized in the HB.

The second section of the volume, "Crossing the Gates and Entering the City (of Memory): Memories of Urban Places and Spaces" opens appropriately with a chapter on city gates. Carey Walsh ("Testing Entry: The Social Functions of City-Gates in Biblical Memory") discusses various memories involving events or characters in which the city gate played an important narrative and symbolic role. She analyzes, for instance, the symbolic role of city gates for setting boundaries, conferring social status, advancing social harmony, communicating a sense of protection, and constructing and exploring transitionality and liminality. Walsh elaborates on how memories of gates of old and their associated areas may have functioned in Persian Yehud and what imagining and remembering a landscape populated by fortified cities, each with its own walls and gates, may have "done" for the community at that time.

The next contribution by Anne Katrine Gudme ("Inside, Outside: Domestic Living Space in Biblical Memory") begins with a thought-provoking observation: "in the Hebrew Bible, domestic living space is often defined by what it is not." She continues with a survey and analysis of textual memories of domestic spaces, while at the same time paying attention to archaeological data. Gudme notices that there are hardly any descriptions of the interior of the house in the HB, which is a very significant point. She dwells on memories of domestic space and the manner in which the latter is usually associated with protection, shelter, safety, and hospitality, but at times with their reversal, when the world is upside down or in danger of being upside down. Gudme explores how domestic spaces became conceptual and imaginative lenses through which readers could envisage and characterize what is clearly outside the domestic space, namely, the general society. She discusses "domestic space as gendered space" and how this spatial gendering relates to the social and economic activities of common women that were widely appreciated in the context of the society of the time. Among Gudme's conclusions: "domestic space in the Hebrew Bible plays a central role in matters of hospitality and in delineating boundaries between inside and outside, ours and theirs, and safety and danger. . . . Statistically, the narratives that identify domestic space as sheltered and as relatively safe space dominate the picture. . . . Therefore, one may conclude that, in the cultural memory of Persian-period Yehud, domestic living space was primarily associated with protection and shelter . . . although the safety of the house or tent could be ambiguous and potentially dangerous . . . or even shattered completely, as in the description of devastated Jerusalem. . . . Interestingly, and not

surprisingly, women frequently play an important role in these descriptions of domestic space. . . . Women belong to the domestic sphere as does hospitality, but according to the Hebrew Bible, the two may not mix well.”

Francis Landy (“Threshing Floors and Cities”) deals with the juxtaposition of city and threshing floor and as he does so, turns our attention to literary threshing floors, “threshing floor[s] of the mind and the imagination,” which acquire “significance from . . . [their] position in the discourse as part of a panoply of references on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic planes, as well as sensations and connotations from everyday life.” Landy focuses primarily on memories, imagination, and sensations evoked by two main narratives that take place in threshing floors, 2 Samuel 24 / 1 Chronicles 21 and 1 Kings 22 / 2 Chronicles 18. His careful study of the former leads him to underscore threshing floors as sites of hybridity.

The transaction between David and Araunah contrasts with or supplements the account of the conquest of Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 5 and corresponds to the statement in Judg 1:21 / Josh 15:63 about the cohabitation of Benjaminites/Judahites and Jebusites “to this very day.” . . . The altar marks the collaboration of Canaanites and Israelites. If, as 2 Chr 3:1 suggests, it is the foundation story of the Temple, it characterizes the Temple itself as being hybrid, as constructed over the site of an agreement between the two peoples, the purchase of land being a sign that David, and Israel with him, has truly come home.

Landy also stresses the role of the threshing floor in this narrative(s)/memory(ies) “as the turning point between life and death.” Early in his discussion of 1 Kings 22 / 2 Chronicles 18, he writes, “Here, the threshing floor is a mirror image of Samaria and, by implication, the entire Northern Kingdom, the crossing point between life and death; as in 2 Samuel 24, it is the site of an oracle, a meta-communication on the narrative. . . . As a threshing floor, it is a metonymy for the fecundity of the kingdom, just as the 400 prophets testify to its divine inspiration and authorization. . . . As an empty, ritualized space, though, it opens up the vacuity of the city; it makes it the antithesis of Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 24, except that Jerusalem and all cities will be destroyed.” Throughout the essay, he relates these two stories. Landy’s essay also has a strong methodological dimension. Although he deals with various methodological issues, directly and indirectly, within the present context it is particularly worth noting his discussion of “the poetics of memory, that is, of the way that memories become the objects of thought and imagination.”

Landy’s essay brought to our attention royal figures in the context of threshing floors. Kåre Berge leads us to study memories of urban places most commonly associated with royalty, as he deals with “Palaces as Sites of Memory and their Impact on the Construction of an Elite “Hybrid” (Local-Global) Cultural Identity in Persian Period Literature.” Berge raises questions such as “what does it mean . . . to make the next generation remember a palatial

edifice or structure and to understand its meaning?" "How is the monarchic palace of Jerusalem remembered in the Persian period?" He makes the point that "there was barely any interest in the old, monarchic palace of Jerusalem as a site of material memory . . . [because] the temple (past, present, and future) drew all the attention and the royal palace was, mainly, ignored." Moreover, "since one should assume that there were ruins of the palace and that the population 'knew' where the palace used to be in the past, 'forgetting' about both should lead to some reflection from both a methodological and a historical or social-scientific point of view, and beyond the obvious point that there was no human king who reigned over Judah from Jerusalem in the Persian period." Berge stresses the point by noticing that even in the utopian landscapes of the future to come that existed at the time, there is no reference to a rebuilt royal palace.

As one shifts the gaze to the remembered past it becomes clear that most references to palaces of the old monarchic period are negative or carry negative associations, once one moves beyond the foundational, Davidic-Solomonic period. Why is this the case, asks Berge. He thinks one explanation may "involve the idea of monarchic royal sin (cf. Sir 49:4)." Another might be "the idea that the only real 'large house' belongs to the Persian kings." Further, "the presentation of the temple in Jerusalem as a *הֵיכָל* for the heavenly king in the Golden Age of Solomon represented no challenge to the Persians' authority from a political perspective but allowed a form of ideological resistance," which brings us back to some of the observations mentioned above.

At the same time, Berge notes that "the reports about the larger size of the Solomonic palace vs. the temple and about the time that Solomon invested in building each one of them . . . demand some discussion," one that he also advances in this essay. Concerning this point, his analysis leads to the conclusion that "memories of the palace of Solomon, and even of succeeding kings in Jerusalem, are 'free-floating,' not linked to the ruins of Nehemiah's time as a site of memory. . . . By participating in an international, 'hybrid' elite culture, however, these biblical memories give significance to the place of Jerusalem, providing the city a discourse or identity." Moreover, informed by the work of the French philosopher M. de Certeau on memory, Berge argues that Jerusalem's royal palace of memory "detaches itself from the place it is supposed to define and serves as an 'imaginary meeting-point on itineraries,' to express it in de Certeau's words (cf. Ps 45). . . . This is why one can continue to speak of those palaces in the Persian period and later, without any need to attach it to the ruins or even the rebuilt palimpsests of the palace structures in Jerusalem." The essay concludes with complementary considerations based on memory, collapse, and postcolonial studies.

The next chapter is by the co-editor of this volume, Diana Edelman, who provides us with a broad discussion of "City Gardens and Parks in Biblical

Social Memory.” She discusses “what constituted a garden in the thought of ancient Judahite and Judean societies, whose memories predominate in the texts,” dwells on matters of terminology, and then explores issues of gardens and royal ideology in ancient Israel within the context of and in a way strongly informed by studies on these matters concerning various ancient near Eastern cultures. Next, she studies royal gardens and gardeners remembered in and evoked by biblical texts, including Persian Kings, Solomon, Ahab, and “Uzza,” before turning to investigate memorial gardens. The final section pays much attention to YHWH as the divine gardener. Among her observations are the following: “almost all the references to gardens, parks, and orchards involve royal . . . or divine gardens.” “Solomon becomes the site of memory for a past Golden Age when peace prevailed in an Israelite-ruled empire and this king created and used royal gardens (Eccl 2:5) that rivaled those associated with Cyrus the Great and Cyrus the Younger by Xenophon.” The garden of “Uzza” likely refers to a new burial ground established by King Hezekiah for his new royal line. “Biblical memory emphasizes YHWH’s role as a gardener of his chosen city, Jerusalem (e.g., Isa 31:5; 37:35; 51:3), and of the ‘Promised Land,’ which he planted, pruned, and weeded/uprooted as though it were a huge park containing cultivated garden areas adjoining his earthly palatial residence.”

Karolien Vermeulen’s chapter (“In Defense of the City: Memories of Water in the Persian Period”) discusses “the perception of water resources in the urbanized context of Persian-period Yehud as it is reflected in biblical texts,” that is, memories associated with water and conceptualizations of water. She examines, among other things, the semantics of natural and domesticated water in Biblical Hebrew—this point is stressed because as stated by J. Fentress and underscored by Vermeulen, “memory is structured by language.” Next, she surveys “different attestations of water and water supplies . . . in biblical texts traditionally understood as originating from the Persian period: the books of Chronicles, Ezra–Nehemiah, Trito-Isaiah, Psalms 120–34, and the prophetic books of Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi.” Here, she also discusses how a text such as Genesis 1, which she dates earlier than the Persian period, was likely reread in that period and pays particular attention to Zech 14:8 and the ideology communicated by this memory of the future. She then proceeds with a study of “the memories evoked by the several attestations” and “the role of water in these memories.” Among Vermeulen’s general conclusions are the following: “While the semantic field of water covers a broad range of natural and domesticated forms of water resources, the texts under study show a clear preference for the latter understanding of water. Even natural water is used in humanly controlled constructions, such as the Fountain Gate and the blocking up of natural springs during warfare. The references evoke memories of formational episodes from the past, centering on undestroyed Jerusalem,

the Davidic monarchy, and the wilderness tradition. As such, they negotiate between past and present, the divine realm and the human world, in order to help the community reestablish their identity. Although the metaphorical use of water to refer to God is present in the text at times, the memories seem to stress the human perspective. Water is conceived as a powerful tool for the community, both in their interactions with other people and in their encounters with the divine.”

The last chapter in this section by Hadi Ghantous and Diana Edelman (“Cisterns and Wells in Biblical Memory”) continues the conversation on the conceptualization of water and memories of water, a topic that has been, on the whole, understudied.⁴ Ghantous and Edelman write at the beginning of their chapter:

by exploring the references to cisterns and wells in the collective whole, we can begin to understand the meaning they encoded for the community, which was reinforced through reading and rereading the texts in which they appear . . . [and] they evoke both life, when they provide water, and its opposite, death, when water dries up or when a person or animal falls into either. In addition, they evoke the opposites, fullness and emptiness. They also evoke concealment, which can be both positive, when it involves hiding from danger, and negative, when it is the result of forced imprisonment or an intention to deceive.

Their study of cisterns and wells located in walled settlements includes a survey of the roles of wells and cisterns, a discussion of definitions, where they challenge the current understanding of interchangeability between the two terms, and a substantial discussion of memories and conceptualizations of wells and cisterns as sources of life and blessing and as places of death, imprisonment or burial. They note, among other things, that

wells have more positive general connotations than cisterns, undoubtedly due to their ability to give access to fresh water from the underground water table; however, in biblical memory, they play a minor role in stories about walled settlements. . . .

Public wells were a natural place for people to meet one another as they drew water for daily use . . . [and] are places particularly associated with females, who were primarily responsible for fetching water for the household on a daily basis. . . .

In Song 4:13–15, [a well is used] to describe a female’s reproductive organs. . . . The well would symbolize the channel that gave access to underground, fresh water that flowed like the emissions. In the context of female anatomy, it would

4. There seems to have been a shift on these issues in the last years. For recent works, see, for instance, Stéphanie Anthonioz, *L’eau, enjeux politiques et théologiques, de Sumer à la Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin, eds., *Thinking of Water in the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period in Judah* (BZAW 461; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).

symbolize the vagina and likely, in ancient thought, the womb as the source of the emissions, which was also conceived of metaphorically as a “spring.”

Finally, they note that the two uses of the root *באר* as a Piel verb in Deut 1:5 and 27:8 are likely “designed to set up a deliberate contrast between the Torah, as the well giving access to fresh water that is vital to sustain life, and the divine mountain, Mt. Horeb, which is a place of ‘dryness’ and so is not life-sustaining.” Concerning cisterns, they note, among other things, that they “exemplify and evoke the biblical world view of the Promised Land being YHWH’s garden tended by his farmer servants.” Ghantous and Edelman also discuss the large set of memories that associated cisterns and wells with images of death, burial, and imprisonment reflected in biblical texts. Their concluding summary states that “cisterns and wells form essential sites for biblical drama, sites where life and death and the struggle with both of them meet and face each other.”

The third and final section in the book deals with particular cities as sites of memory. The section begins and ends with chapters devoted to Jerusalem, which is appropriate, given the prominence of Jerusalem as a site of memory within the communities discussed here. The opening chapter is my own contribution (“Exploring Jerusalem as a Site of Memory in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Period”). It contains two main sections. The first deals with “interactions between different ways in which Jerusalem served as site of memory and contributed to the shaping of other sites of memory and core mnemonic narratives in the community” and “with processes by which material signposts in Jerusalem influenced the discourse of the period and the ways in which Jerusalem was remembered and, conversely, the impact that Jerusalem of the mind had on social and political developments. . . . in other words, it traces connections between material Jerusalem and the Jerusalem of the mind and vice versa.” This section deals, for instance, with the mnemonic, generative importance of low population, empty spaces and ruins in and around Jerusalem in the Persian period and with intra- and interprovincial interactions in historical Yehud and their contribution to the shaping of memories of Jerusalem. In addition, this section addresses the fact that memories evoked by the temple-centered Jerusalem of the mind that existed within the community were most likely the reason that the temple and, eventually, Jerusalem were rebuilt in the first instance, and that this sort of Jerusalem of the mind continued to influence the “material” city. The second section explores central constructions of “Jerusalem” from the perspective of social memory. It discusses, among other things, matters of mindshare, of central cities, cosmic order, divine wisdom, and of their manifestations in the remembered future of the community, of hierarchies and gendered images, of divine creation and building of Jerusalem, secondary human partners and *imago dei*, of memories of monarchic Jerusalem in postmonarchic Jerusalem, and of how multiple memories and images of Jerusalem balanced each other. The chapter concludes by noting that

Jerusalem was a site of memory that did not necessarily foreground images of busy markets, workers, human houses, or an implied urban characterization of labor. . . . Instead [it] communicated a sense of utopian and eternal cosmic sanctity. . . . As such, Jerusalem had to exist eternally but also had a reality outside historical time, just like its foundational streams of waters. This Jerusalem . . . provided hope for the future, facilitating a Jerusalem-centered version of traditional ancient Near Eastern motifs consistent with the discourse of the community. . . . At the same time, it turned a potential cognitive dissonance into an argument sustaining the main tenets of the then-present community while simultaneously contributing to the formation of in-group boundaries that separated the community from other communities of YHWH worshipers in the vicinity of Yehud as well as the role and centrality of the temple within Yehud.

Historical developments in Jerusalem and Yehud cannot be understood without reference to Samaria. The next chapter in the volume by Russell Hobson, "The Memory of Samaria in the Books of Kings," deals with memories of Samaria and with Samaria as a site of memory in late Persian-period Jerusalem from the perspective of the community reading the book of Kings. The chapter begins with considerations about cultural memory, identity, and communal authoritative repertoires and their social roles that lead to an explanation of the heuristic power of the discourse of anthropology and cognitive psychology. Here, his main focus is on the use of concepts such as cognitively optimal and cognitively costly representation and the theory of minimal group paradigms proposed by H. Tajfel to further the study of social memory in the communities discussed here. In the rest of the chapter, he explores "how Whitehouse's theory of corrupted doctrine and Pyyiäinen's theory of doctrinal revival [along with Tajfel's theory of minimal group paradigms] could help explain the construction of the memory of Samaria in the book of Kings." Hobson argues that "in its revived form [unlike the older layers of doctrinal material], the material that concerns Samaria in the books of Kings has been redrafted to polemicize the relationship between that city and the city of Jerusalem. . . . As the model Northern city, Samaria represents a kind of anti-Jerusalem." He reasons that the view of the precalamity, sinful, YHWH-rejecting Jerusalem, which ideologically is an "anti-Jerusalem" present toward the end of the book of Kings, "colors discourse earlier in the book concerning Samaria. . . . The negative portrayal of Samaria is, in fact, a response to the demise of Jerusalem. . . . The Northern capital is presented consistently as an inverse of YHWH's chosen city in terms of its foundation, its rulership, and the character of its cult." According to Hobson, what makes "these memories all the more effective is their ability to combine cognitively optimal and cognitively costly representations through the use of a novel and potentially interesting format. . . . The construction of Jerusalem as sanctioned and Samaria as rejected creates an easy way to conceptualize the interaction of two competing concepts of identity." And yet, Samaria is not only an "anti-Jerusalem," because

the two cities were sisters who shared the same fate as estranged wives of YHWH, seeking reunification with their husband, their ba'al. . . . These notions need not have been exclusive in the minds of those reading and rereading the texts. . . . [T]he memories of Samaria that existed in the minds of the literate elite in Yehud, utilized effective methods of memorization that would have encouraged the coexistence of the two memories within the national psyche. . . . Human memory has evolved a tremendous capacity for eliding consistency in order to maintain a sense of cohesiveness. . . . The biblical texts, as products of human and cultural memory, show us exactly this.

Samaria is not the only city identified with the North. Yairah Amit's chapter deals with Shechem and already in her choice of title, "How to Slander the Memory of Schechem," she reminds us that remembering Schechem most often involved slandering Shechem within the collective memory of the Israel whose memory is revealed through biblical texts. Amit surveys memories of Shechem reflected in Genesis, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Kings and discusses similarities with Jerusalem that "create the impression that Jerusalem replaced Shechem in the Judean collective memory." She notices ambiguities and argues that

the ambiguous memory of Shechem is part of the "mythic" history of the city from early times. . . . This ambiguity is retained throughout the Deuteronomistic History. . . . The reader may ask: why is the city, which appears in the covenant ceremony in Josh 24:1–28, not mentioned in the ceremony that takes place near Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim in Deut 11:29–32, chap. 27, and Josh 8:32? . . . Why is the city not mentioned after the division of the Kingdom? . . . What trend operated to avoid any mention of the city or to depict it negatively?

Then Amit addresses mnemonic/literary "tendentiousness and its means of expression." In particular, she looks at the means used to detract from Shechem's status and the explicit avoidance of references to Shechem in the literature, pointing out the city is not mentioned in the Deuteronomistic Historical collection after the reign of Jeroboam I and very rarely in the prophetic books, except in Hos 6:9 and Jer 41:5. The net effect is a blurring its presence and insertions of negative or derogatory comments about Shechem in existing narratives that effectively contribute to the shaping of a negative memory of Shechem. Among Amit's conclusions are the following:

[it] transpires that, despite the importance and centrality of the city of Shechem, it appears in a thoroughly negative light in biblical memory. . . . Some returnees regarded Shechem and the Northern population favorably and had marriage ties with them (Neh 13:28–29), especially before Ezra and Nehemiah restored Jerusalem . . . [but o]thers were interested in separation and remaining aloof; they would not have regarded the people of the North as worthy associates in the temple of Jerusalem . . . [and] would have made every effort to denigrate Shechem and its surroundings, declaring that this was not the place that God had

chosen to establish His name. . . . Both groups created the complex literary reality in the texts of the Hebrew Bible and the effect it has had on historical memory.

During the Neo-Babylonian era, the political capital of the province of Judah was Mizpah and likely remained as the political center in the early Persian period. The next chapter by Daniel Pioske, "Mizpah and the Possibilities of Forgetting," focuses on this city and, in so doing, brings to the forefront the issue of forgetting. Pioske writes, "In a volume devoted to the city as a site of memory in the Hebrew Bible, the place of Mizpah finds particular importance, because it offers insights into how the work of remembering connected to the writing and reading of these ancient texts also included, in certain instances, the work of forgetting." Given the close relationship between place and memory as discussed and underscored by Pioske in this chapter and Mizpah's ability "to survive the events that ended the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and remain a center of highland life in the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods," the peculiar silence surrounding Mizpah's time as capital within the biblical narrative demands an explanation. "When the historian turns to those texts written by the generations affected by these events [that is, the Babylonian invasion and the catastrophe to the area that it brought], literary references to the century of Mizpah's rule are nearly entirely absent." They actually stop after the story of Gedaliah's murder, despite the fact that "the site continued to function as the provincial center of the region." Thus, Mizpah "provides a concrete and compelling example of an ancient literary culture's attempt to negotiate their community's past by expunging certain memories from their writings." Pioske underlines that "the lack of references to its [Mizpah's] history in the 6th century B.C.E. coincides with the preservation of prominent allusions to its more distant past within this same body of literature." Pioske's analysis, informed by Paul Ricoeur's discussion of manipulation of memories and forgetfulness by those in power, leads him to the conclusion that

the strong bond between place and memory and the persistence of Mizpah's physical remains as one journeyed northward from Jerusalem would have made this a particularly difficult forgetting, and it is for this reason, perhaps, that certain images of Mizpah's importance in a more ancient past were preserved and lifted up within the biblical narrative. . . . The textual silence surrounding Mizpah's century of rule after Jerusalem's fall, however, suggests that particular memories of this time were a burden too difficult to bear for those behind the formation of the biblical narrative and that the exigencies of remembering a certain past through these writings were inextricably bound to the possibilities of forgetting others.

The volume then moves on to three non-Israelite cities that became important sites of memory for the literati of the early Second Temple: Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon. Philippe Guillaume studies memories of the first in his contribution, "Dislocating Jerusalem's Memory with Tyre." He argues that the HB

“uses Tyre as a nonmaterial *lieu de mémoire* that is crucial to the way Yehudites were to experience Jerusalem.” He points out that “Tyre’s fabulous wealth is associated with ultimate hubris” but also that Tyre was strongly contrasted with Sidon, citing multiple examples, and that in this context, Tyre was portrayed very positively, as a benevolent city. One of its kings was even remembered as acknowledging YHWH’s sovereignty. He argues that “underlining the boundary between Tyre and Sidon served to reduce the distance between Tyre and Jerusalem and to bracket Samaritan Israel.”

Following a discussion of Tyre and Tyrians in Chronicles and Nehemiah, Guillaume refers to the

two sides of the same coin: heads is a religious depiction of Tyre as a generous patron of the temple. . . . Tails is stuck with the price of Tyre’s generosity; the dominant position of Tyre and Sidon in the market in Jerusalem. . . . Theology legitimates Tyrian generosity toward the temple of Jerusalem and seeks to curtail the implications of this generosity by remembering the original temple of YHWH was a Judahite piece of art made with Tyrian materials.

Then he shifts his attention to the prophetic corpus and some relevant Psalms. He notices a different approach is used here. He argues that “the classification of Tyre as an enemy [in several of these texts] plays on the standard resentment of farmers the world over, who associate trade with robbery” and who construe themselves as “self-righteous victims of external traders.”

Guillaume underscores that many “modern commentators are as virulent as the prophets in their denunciations” of “merchant greed,” and by doing so they confuse memory with history in their attempt to identify with the prophets of old. There are other voices, however, within the prophetic texts “besides the caricature of Tyre as the capital of extortion.” For instance, Isa 23:1–18 closes with an oracle of restoration. Now, “instead of stockpiling her wealth on the island, Tyre dedicates it to YHWH and sends it to the temple in Jerusalem to feed and clothe the faithful. Rather than wishing for Tyre’s destruction, Isaiah accepts Tyre’s dominant position as preordained by YHWH himself, so that Tyre’s wealth can benefit Jerusalem.” Guillaume pointedly writes about the conceptual world of this passage: “Renewed Tyrian trade is still qualified as prostitution, but here, of a sacred kind. . . . Tyre’s profits will be used to support those who live in YHWH’s presence. . . . Wall Street remains Wall Street but its profits find their way to Me’ah Shea’rim.”

After a discussion of several other prophetic texts, Guillaume addresses constructions of Tyre as a partial template for Jerusalem and “experiencing Tyre in Jerusalem.” In this section, he proposes, among other things, that “Yehudites were made to experience Jerusalem and its temple more or less consciously as an island of spiritual treasures isolated from its surroundings” and in their encounter with the materiality of the temple, construed and remembered as the successor of the Solomonic temple, the Yehudites also experienced their Tyre.

He concludes with the statement, "Memory recovers what history ignores: the thickness and permanence of social reality that history shortcuts with the presentation of significant events and individuals. . . . Remembered apart from Tyre, Jerusalem is less Jerusalem."

The next chapter by Steven W. Holloway ("Nineveh as Meme in Persian Period Yehud") discusses Nineveh, a city that agitated the imagination of various groups, including Yehudites, Greeks, Egyptians, and Arameans, for centuries after its destruction. Holloway first explores the multiple memories associated with Nineveh in biblical texts. He examines those attested in Genesis, Kings, Isaiah, and Zephaniah and dwells extensively on those constructed by the books of Nahum and Jonah. Clearly, Nineveh is often portrayed in extremely negative terms. "In most parts of the Bible, Assyria, destroyer of the Northern Kingdom and would-be destroyer of Zion/Jerusalem, is dabbled in garish Technicolor tones crafted to illustrate its violent and devastatingly efficient militarism. . . . Nineveh is a city of bloodshed, deceitful, crammed with booty." But Nineveh is also a fascinating and multivalent site of memory that served to explore numerous theological issues in Yehud. In fact, as he concludes the section on the Nineveh of the book of Jonah, Holloway asks, "How many of the tormenting theodical conundra of postmonarchic Yehud did the polyvalent figure of Nineveh address?"

Holloway also notices significant absences that require explanation. To begin with, biblical memories of Nineveh have little to do with the "historical" Nineveh. "Nineveh . . . was a helpless ghost, a dirigible memory susceptible to 10,000 variant retellings with no angry Assyrians left to disavow the Bible's artistic license." It is not just that the Nineveh(s) of the Bible were not about the historical Nineveh but about Jerusalem and those remembering it in postmonarchic Yehud, but also that little particular, historical knowledge about Nineveh is reflected in Nahum or Jonah. Moreover, "while Zephaniah makes of the ruins of Nineveh a *Mahnmal*, horrifying all passers-by who can connect the moldering ruins with the once-proud Assyrian capital, the Hebrew Bible does not memorialize the monuments left in Israel, Judah, and surrounding states that testify to Assyrian military prowess. . . . The fall of Lachish, Judah's most heavily fortified city, and the heaps of war-dead buried in mass graves are passed over in silence." Holloway discusses all these issues, their possible significance, and the possible reasons for these absences.

In addition, Holloway places the meme "Nineveh" in its ancient, post-Assyrian context, by examining images and memories of Nineveh (and its Sargonid-period kings) in ancient nonbiblical sources. He devotes sections to BM 21901 (96-4-9,6), Papyrus Amherst 63, the fall of Nineveh in Seleucid pseudepigraphic apologetics, Nineveh in Greek "Persika" literature, the pattern of successive world empires beginning with Assyria, Inaros legends in Demotic literature, the Aramaic Sheikh Faḍl inscription, Aḥīqar legends, and Tobit and Judith as well. He regularly compares the construction of Nineveh or its kings

in these texts and in biblical books. In one case, he concludes that “unlike the Bible, none of the Sardanapallus stories attribute the fall of Nineveh to an act of vengeance against former Assyrian depredations. . . . On the contrary, Arbaces, a Median general under Sardanapallus, conspires with a Chaldean priest to oust the Assyrian king ‘because the Assyrian lacked nobility.’” In another,

Egypt retained Nineveh and its Sargonid kings as potent memories susceptible to imaginative reformulation eight centuries after the historical extirpation of the Assyrian Empire, although the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. does not resonate in the extant retellings. . . . The Egyptian storytellers refashioned national heroes into weapons mighty enough to defeat the Assyrian invaders, exact political submission, and redress the scandal of deported divine images. . . . In the Hebrew Bible, the one hero capable of besting the Assyrians was YHWH.

His chapter includes an excursus entitled “Herodotus Histories as Persian Empire Foil for Biblical Nineveh.”

As Ulrike Sals (“Babylon Forever or How to Divinize What You Want to Damn”) notes, “no other city except Jerusalem is mentioned as often as Babylon in the HB.” She begins her study of Babylon as a Yehudite site of memory by underscoring the difference between Babylon, the historical city, and “Babylon,” namely, “a symbol of world power, of self-reliant women, and of anti-Yahwistic morals.” She notes also that “various texts in the Hebrew Bible, in effect, divinized ‘Babylon’ in their attempt to damn it.” In the ensuing pages, she develops an analysis of “some traits of the ‘Babylonian’ mystique” that zooms in on matters such as “Babylonam delendam esse,” “Babylon is everything,” “power and gender,” “site as (literary/ideological/mnemonic) topos,” “‘Babylon’ as an admired civilization,” “other capitals, kingdoms, and ‘Babylon,’” “Jerusalem/Judah and ‘Babylon,’” and “YHWH and ‘Babylon.’” It is worth noting that “‘Babylon’ has more than one gender, just like YHWH.” She then turns her attention to literary techniques used to construct a powerful and certainly memorable “Babylon.”

Sals concludes her chapter with a description of the process used for divinizing “Babylon” and analyzing its details. In a nutshell, there are five main components for the process: (a) “quantify: imagine ‘Babylon’s’ destruction many times”; (b) “create a web of linked images”; (c) “eternalize: let ‘Babylon’ be a symbol for ‘eternal’ problems such as civilization, urbanism, self-reliant women, and power-hungry rulers”; (d) “demonize: intensify ‘Babylon’s’ evilness until only YHWH himself can defeat it; “integrate: add ‘Babylon’ to your religious system of symbols . . . and link it with other constituent elements, making it the opposite counterpart to Jerusalem and the opponent of YHWH”; and (e) “adjust: whenever something historical happens to Babylon, integrate it into your literary and religious image of ‘Babylon.’” This “recipe” for the construction of the site of memory “Babylon” is heuristically very helpful and thought-provoking and so is Sals’s final conclusion: “‘Babylon’ will never cease to exist because its destruction is forever near.”

Following the explorations of these diverse cities as sites of memory, the volume goes back to “the City,” Jerusalem of the late Persian period. This time, the contributor is Carla Sulzbach, with “Building Castles on the Shifting Sands of Memory: From Dystopian to Utopian Views of Jerusalem in the Persian Period.” In her opening paragraph, she states, “throughout the Persian period . . . Jerusalem most likely was ‘nothing to write home about’ for those who actually lived there—which is, of course, exactly what did happen: not the real city, but the one of constructed memory and imagination would be the subject of song and story.” But which Jerusalem(s) is/are constructed out of memory and imagination? Sulzbach’s starting point is her previous work on Lamentations 2 and Psalm 24 and the mirror images and memories that these texts evoked.⁵ She notes here, in particular, the attention and, I would say mindshare, given to “the gates and walls, those architectural features that deal specifically with allowing and denying access.”

Real or imaginary architectural features play important roles in the construction of memories and acts of remembrance. It is in this context that Sulzbach brings to the fore texts such as Ps 48:13–14[12–13], which urge “the addressees to make a mental map of an obviously restored Jerusalem in order to recount it to the following generations.” People are to be reminded of the glorious Jerusalem even generations after it is established. Why would that be? What does it say about those imagining utopia? Moreover, which architectural features are to be remembered?

In all these poetic and/or prophetic descriptions, the focus is on the public spaces of the city’s defense works, its temple, and its palaces. . . . The domestic spaces and urban arteries such as streets and squares are hardly, if at all, touched on, with the exception of Lam 2:11–12, 19, 21 where, in the absence of the deity, they have become a place of death. . . . Purely utopian texts, such as Psalm 24, are mostly focused on a reconstituted sacred space at the expense of the lived spaces of the actual city dwellers.

Sulzbach also notes not only that the remembering of Jerusalem in various ways, as well as reminders of the city, be they utopian or dystopian, are necessary to Israel in the Persian period, but also that the community constructs a deity that needs to be reminded of Jerusalem; see, for example, Isa 62:6–7. “Nehemiah feels compelled to remind God of the poor state of society, as if he would not know.”

Sulzbach’s contribution dwells considerably on a number of other issues, including mythic patterns that contributed to the shaping of memories of Jerusalem, convergences between mythic and not necessarily mythic patterns, and connections between constructions of particular memories of Jerusalem,

5. Carla Sulzbach, “Of Gates in the Ground and Castles in the Air: A Case of Biblical Unreal Estate,” *SJOT* 26 (2012) 266–88.

especially those concerning its walls, and the mindset of the golah-literati and their opponents as reflected in Ezra–Nehemiah and in texts from Elephantine and Al-Yahudu. Her summarizing conclusion to her contribution is as follows:

Through the use, reuse, and manipulation of especially standardized architectural motifs, an image of Jerusalem and the temple is created that far exceeds any resemblance to historical reality. Through the creative use of these shared, remembered, and memorized elements, a fictive reality emerges that allows its users to identify with the created image as well as with each other. We have a community with an identity that is lodged in a text that paints its own reality. Since this picture tallies neither with the material real past nor the real present, there is only one direction to go: the future. Of course, the question remains whether the implementation of a society based on one group's "remembrance" of a utopian golden past, be it theocratic or not, is desirable, but this is a different issue that cannot be discussed here.

The preceding survey of the contents of the book has drawn attention to *some* of the ideas and arguments advanced by the contributors while also conveying something of the flavor of their voices. After this "appetizer," it is up to the reader to peruse "the real thing" as a main course and, hopefully, to join the conversation about city and memory in late Persian and early Hellenistic Yehud so as to advance historical knowledge on this important topic for the reconstruction of the world of ideas of the early Second Temple period. Diana Edelman and I look forward to the continuation of the conversation.

Cities of Glory and Cities of Pride: Concepts, Gender, and Images of Cities in Mesopotamia and in Ancient Israel

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Cities are usually feminine in the Hebrew Bible, and recent literature has greatly enriched our knowledge of this phenomenon.¹ However, as stated by F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “cities and nations are not inherently feminine; human beings (here, the biblical writers) must construe them as such. They are constructed, imaginatively, through human cognition and inventiveness.”² Much debate has taken place to account for the feminine personification of cities. Comparative studies, particularly done in light of the genre of Mesopotamian lamentations and ritual *balag* or *eršemma* corporate laments, have brought to light some common trends.³ *The balag* and *eršemma* contain many instances of

1. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter Zion,” in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson* (ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook; Old Testament Studies 502; London: T. & T. Clark, 2009) 125–34; John A. Dearman, “YHWH’s House: Gender Roles and Metaphors for Israel in Hosea,” *JNSL* 25 (1999) 97–108, which is a response to John J. Schmitt, “Yahweh’s Divorce in Hosea 2—Who is That Woman?” *SJOT* 9 (1995) 119–32, itself being a response to William D. Whitt, “The Divorce of YHWH and Asherah in Hos 2,4–7.12ff.,” *SJOT* 6 (1992) 31–37. Note also the feminist approach with the recent volume, Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn S. Flesher, eds., *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012) in response to Carleen Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

2. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter Zion,” 132.

3. Dobbs-Allsopp proposed that the personification was a development of the Mesopotamian city goddess weeping for the destruction of her city (“The Syntagma of *bat* Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar,” *CBQ* 57 [1995] 451–70). Elaine Follis has drawn attention to the importance of the Hellenistic background (“The Holy City as Daughter,” in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* [ed. Elaine Follis; JSOTSup 40; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987] 173–84). Aloysius Fitzgerald has argued that an actual goddess lies behind the image (“BTWLT and BT as Titles for Capital Cities,” *CBQ* 37 [1975] 167–83; and idem, “The Mythological Background for the Presentation Jerusalem as a Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the OT,” *CBQ* 34 [1972] 403–16).

cities “weeping and crying.” The Poem of Erra has the city walls crying out.⁴ After reviewing the state of the comparative question, M. Biddle concludes, “as a general rule cities were neither personified nor deified in Mesopotamia.”⁵ He acknowledges that cities and their temples were regarded as having been founded by their respective patron deities and that the city and its temple were earthly representatives of the cosmic circle. But “in the West Semitic and Hellenistic realms, close identification between deity and city extended even further and in a sense simplified as the city herself was regarded as divine. A primary symbol was the mural crown adorning the deified city.”⁶ He concludes:

Seen from a modern standpoint, personification is an interesting literary device, a technique which allows for the treatment of objects and concepts in more dramatically involved ways than is the norm; seen against the background of cities identified with patron deities or themselves deified, the personification of Jerusalem becomes a theological device, as well, allowing for dramatic development, but also setting Jerusalem in proper relation to her God.⁷

His conclusion provides an excellent starting point here, because it underscores both the literary techniques (personification and metaphorization) and their theological consequences (the relation between the city and its god). However, he has not dealt adequately with the fact that no city in the ancient Near East ever receives the treatment that daughter Zion does, *who is personified to the point of becoming alive for her God and to the reader*. The distance between the literary technique and its effect seems to be abolished.

The purpose of this essay is to understand how in the biblical realm, more than in any other literary corpus, cities developed into personified entities so as to become particular sites of memory in the final redactions of the text. Before investigating the literary trope of personification, I will review the Mesopotamian material in order to grasp the conceptualization of cities and, in a wider sense, the conceptualization of civilization. It is not sufficient to state that, in general, cities were neither personified nor deified. Much more may be added that also sheds light on the conceptualization and the images used in the Bible. The last section of this essay will be devoted to the investigation of those biblical images and the unique status of Jerusalem.

4. Leland E. Wilshire, “Jerusalem as the ‘Servant City’ in Isaiah 40–66: Reflections in the Light of Further Study of the Cuneiform Tradition,” in *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature* (ed. William W. Hallo, Bruce W. Jones, and Gerald L. Mattingly; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990) 231–55.

5. Mark E. Biddle, “The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification and Personification of Cities in the Ancient Near East,” in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective* (ed. K. Lawson Younger; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991) 175.

6. Biddle, “Figure of Lady Jerusalem,” 179.

7. *Ibid.*, 186.

In ancient Near Eastern sources, especially Mesopotamian sources, cities undoubtedly embody protection with their walls and fortifications. Although the Akkadian etymology of the word for “city” may not confirm this notion of protection,⁸ it can be inferred from many literary and historical texts. So, for example, King Samsu-iluna (1749–1712 B.C.E.), Hammurabi’s successor to the throne of Babylon, ensured peace in the land by constructing several forts and rebuilding cities. The function of the wall of Nippur is described as follows:

At that time, [Sa]msu-iluna, [shepherd w]ho pleases [the hear]t of the god M[ard]uk, [by] the lofty power which the great gods gave to him, by the wisdom which the god Ea granted him, widened more than it had been previou[sly] and raised high as a grea[t] mountain the wall of Nippur, (the wall) of Sîn-muballit, [h]is grandfather. He surrounded [it] with a moa[t]. He dug the Euphr[ates] and made the wall reach the bank of the Euphrates. He call[ed] that wall ‘Band of the lan[ds]’. He caused the people of the land of Sumer and Akkad to dwell in peaceful abodes. He made (them) lie down in pastures.⁹

From this inscription and the rebuilding of walls, one clearly sees not only how the city but also the land is enlarged and secured, offering a peaceful life for the people. In the same way, the biblical terms for ‘city’ (עיר or קריה) refer to protection.¹⁰ Cities protect from external aggression (2 Sam 20:19; Num 13:19, 28; Deut 3:3–5; and 2 Kgs 17:9). People gather together in cities, where they find needed food and housing along with military defense. For this reason, they are built on the borders of territories or at the heart of commercial routes. For example, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer are located on the route from Egypt to Syria, whereas Beth-Horon is on the route from the coast to the central mountains. By gathering people together and providing protection, cities create social cohesion, provide technical facilities, and stimulate economical developments as well as political authority. From this general overview of the terms used for cities in Mesopotamia and the Bible, no single gendered image of cities emerges; protection and security may be understood in masculine terms (strength, power, and military defense) or in feminine terms (human and social

8. The word *ālu* is a masculine nominal root that has produced nouns and adjectives or adverbs such as *ālū* ‘townsman’ (plu: *ālūtum*), *ālūm* ‘citizen, local’, *ālāyū* ‘citizen, (dependent) villager’, *ālāyūtu* ‘status of dependent villager’, *ālānū* ‘living in a (foreign) place, abroad, exile’ (fem: *ālānitu*), *ālīšam* ‘village by village’. See Jeremy Black et al., eds., *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000) 13; David Cohen et al., eds., *Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques ou attestées dans les langues sémitiques* (Paris: Mouton, 1970).

9. Douglas Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)* (Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Early Periods 4; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 373–74 (E4.3.7.1).

10. The noun עיר is a feminine root that *probably* means ‘protection’ (Eckart Otto, “עיר, city,” in *TDOT* 11:51–67) while קריה is closely associated with קיר ‘wall’ (Martin J. Mulder, “קריה, city,” in *TDOT* 13:164–67).

development). I will focus now on the conceptualization that emerges from city images in Mesopotamian and West-Semitic literary and historical texts and then I will turn to the Hebrew Bible.

In Sumer, the necessities of life facilitated the early emergence of centralized and well-organized structures.¹¹ In the literature of Sumer and Akkad, cities are literally given birth at the beginning of time; they are gifts of the gods, just as civilization is a divine gift. This point is made clear in several mythological texts, although the best examples are perhaps the Sumerian King List and *Enki and the World Order*. In the Sumerian King List, kingship is passed on in a linear way from city to city.¹² Kingship is defined as a gift from heaven carried down to earth from the beginning of times, even before the flood, which means, by extension, that the cities the kings ruled over also are conceived to have existed from the beginning. In *Enki and the World Order*, the overall structure of the myth is significant for our purpose and may be summarized as follows:¹³

- I. lines 1–60, hymn to Enki,
- II. 1. lines 61–85, self-glorification of Enki,
 2. lines 86–140, acclamation from the Anunna,
 3. lines 141–170, Enki gets ready for the trip and world inspection,
- III. 1. lines 171–389, world inspection and attribution of destinies,
 2. Sumer, Ur, Meluhha, Magan, Dilmun, Elam, Marhaši, land of Martu, Tigris and Euphrates,
 3. Tigris and Euphrates are attributed to Enbilulu, marshes to an unknown god, the sea to Nanše, rains to Iškur, agriculture to Enkimdu, plants to Ašnan, pottery to Kulla, architecture to Mušdama, animals to Šakan, herds to Dumuzi, judgment to Utu, and weaving to Uttu.
- IV. 1. lines 390–420, Inanna's complaint,
 2. Enki's response is broken: he seems to remind her that she already is the goddess of love and war.

As the god of water and of the city Eridu, Enki appears in this myth as the great organizer of the world. Lands, cities and even rivers clearly exist from the

11. For the history and archaeology of ancient cities, see for example Walter E. Aulfrecht et al., eds., *Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (JSOTSup 244; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). For Israel specifically, see Volkmar Fritz, *The City in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

12. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

13. Carlos Benito, *Enki and Ninmah and, Enki and the World Order* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980) 114–36.

beginning of time, but in this case, instead of kings, cities are assigned different gifts of life (arts, techniques, and localities) that are attributed to different divinities. At the center of this world organization stands the city of Ur. For this reason, Enki and the World Order has been dated to the end of the third millennium, when the city of Ur was flourishing as a vast kingdom. From this mythological discourse, it can be seen that cities are not just *human* creations built to protect and help humanity to develop (humanly, economically, and politically); they have a quasi-divine status they receive from their establishment at the beginning of time. Moreover their economical, urban, and social organization exists from the beginning.

Some ancient cities are said to have been built by the gods themselves and consequently share in their divine radiance and royal glory. The best-known example is Babylon, as recounted in *Enuma Elish*. Babylon is founded by the god Marduk in the Apsû (the mythological original milieu before creation):

117. *marduk pâšu îpušma iqabbi*
Marduk opened his mouth, he said,¹⁴
118. *ana ilāni (dingir.dingir) abbīšu (ad.ad) amātum izzakkar*
To the gods his fathers he addresses a word:
119. *elēnu apsî (zu.ab) šubat ḥašmāni*
Over the Apsû, house of amethyst,
120. *miḥrit ešarra ša abnû anāku elkun*
A counterpart of Ešarra I have built for you.
121. *šapliš ašrata udannina qaqqarša*
Under Ašratu, the base of which I have strengthened,
122. *lūpušma bīta lu šubat lalêja*
May I build a house, house of my fullness!
123. *qerbuššu māḥāzašu lušaršidma*
Inside it may I establish its sanctuary!
124. *kummī ludda lukīn šarrūtī*
May I reveal my shrine, make firm my kingship!
125. *enūma ultu apsî tillā ana puḥrum*
When from Apsû you ascend to the assembly,
126. *ašruššu lu nubattakun ana maḥār puḥurkun*
May this place be your stop for your assembly!

14. The transcription is proposed according to the edition of Thomas R. Kämmerer and Kai A. Metzler, *Das babylonische Welterschöpfungsepos Enūma elīš* (AOAT 375; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012). The translation is by the present author and shows deliberately that Babylon is not feminized; the grammatical pronoun referring to the city is never feminine. Babylon is a masculine noun.

127. *enūma ultu šamāmī turr[ad]â [ana puḥri]*
When you come [dow]n from the heavens [for the assembly]
128. *[ašruššu] lu nubattakun ana maḥār puḥurkun*
May [this place] be your stop for your assembly!
129. *lubbima šum[šu bal.ti]^{ki} bitātu ilāni rabûti (é.meš dingir.meš gal.meš)*
May I call [its] name [Baby]lon, houses of the great gods!
130. *nīni qerb[uššu] nippuš i[sinnā]tum*
May we, in[side it] make f[eas]ts!
131. *i[šmūma ilāni a]bbišu annâ q[ab]âšu*
[The gods] his [fa]thers h[ear]d that d[iscou]rse (. . .)
137. *bal.ti^{ki} ša tazkura šumšu (mu) du[m-qī]*
Babylon whose go[od] name you have pronounced,
138. *aš[ruššu šubt]ani iddi dārišam*
[That] pla[ce], our [hous]e, establish for ever!

The divine construction of Babylon is announced at the end of the fifth tablet of *Enuma Elish*, after Marduk's victory over Tiamat and her armies and after the creation of the world from her corpse. However, Babylon is fully built only in the sixth tablet, after Marduk creates men and the gods decide to build the sanctuary themselves in thanksgiving for what Marduk has done for them:

47. *anunnaki pâšunu ippušūma*
The Anunnaki opened their mouth,
48. *ana marduk (^damar.utu) bēlišunu šunu izzakrū*
To Marduk their lord they said:
49. *inanna bēli ša šubarrâni taškūnuma*
Now Lord that you have established our deliverance,
50. *mīnu dumqani ina maḥrika*
What good can we (do) before you?
51. *i nīpuš parakki ša nabû zikiršu*
May we build the sanctuary whose name has been called!
52. *kummukku lu nubattani i nušapših qerbuš*
May your shrine be our stop so that we may find our rest inside!
53. *i niddi parakku nēmeda ašaršu*
May we lay the foundation of the sanctuary, a platform there!
54. *ina ūme ša nikaššada i nušapših qerbuš*
On the day we come may we find our rest inside!
55. *marduk (^damar.utu) annîtu ina šemēšu*

- When Marduk heard this,
56. *kīma ūmu immeru zīmušu ma'diš*
like the day his face shone greatly!
57. *epšā tin.tir^{ki} ša tērešā šipiršu*
Build Babylon which work you have desired!
58. *libnātsu lippatiqma parakka zukra*
May its bricks be formed, the sanctuary named!
59. *anunnaki itrūkū alla*
The Anunnaki beat with the axe.
60. *šattu ištāt libittašu iltebnū*
One year they moulded bricks.
61. *šanītu šattu (mu.an.na) ina kašādi*
When the second year arrived,
62. *ša esagil (é.sag.íl) miḥrit apsû (zu.ab) ullû rēšišu*
The head of Esagil, counterpart of Apsû, they elevated.
63. *ibnûma ziqqurāt apsû (zu.ab) elīte*
They built the high ziqqurat of Apsû.¹⁵

While the city is certainly deified, it is not feminized. The divine quality of this capital city is connected to its central sanctuary so that the city is somehow an expanded sanctuary, the holy and sacred emanation of the temple as well as a reflection of the heavenly temple. Like temples and walls, cities also may be called “mount” (or “mountain”). As already seen in the royal inscription of Samsu-iluna, the image of the mountain symbolizes the original pillar separating heaven and earth in the beginning of time, with sanctuaries being the last point of contact between heaven and earth and their function being to connect them eternally.

According to the ideology of royal mediation, as the sole mediator between gods and men the king must care for cities and is charged with guarding the many gifts of creation and transmitting them. First and foremost is the care of his capital city, where the principal god resides,¹⁶ but kings routinely commission inscriptions that recall the work they have done to (re)build and restore

15. That is, the Etemenanki.

16. This may explain the plot of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. As the story begins, Gilgamesh is not caring for his city Uruk. He is a violent king; he leaves no son to his father and no woman to her husband. Enkidu is created to counter Gilgamesh's violence. By the *finale* of the epic, it becomes clear that the hero has at last become the king he should be, a mediator keeping peace and equilibrium. His city now has peace, and the peace of the larger region is safeguarded. As a result, the city may be sung as having been founded by the Seven Sages, cared for by its king, and, therefore, endowed with royal and divine glory.

cities and sanctuaries throughout their realms. We already quoted one of these belonging to Samsu-iluna. Interestingly, the royal glory of the rebuilding and restoring of cities may be found in West Semitic sources and the Bible. A number of notices in the books of Kings and Chronicles record the construction and fortification of cities undertaken by the kings of Israel and Judah:

- Rehoboam: “Rehoboam resided in Jerusalem, and he built cities for defense in Judah. He built up Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, fortified cities that are in Judah and in Benjamin. He made the fortresses strong and put commanders in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine.¹² He also put large shields and spears in all the cities and made them very strong. So he held Judah and Benjamin.” (2 Chr 11:5–12)
- Jeroboam: “Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and resided there; he went out from there and built Penuel.” (1 Kgs 12:25)
- Baasha: “King Baasha of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, to prevent anyone from going out or coming in to King Asa of Judah.” (1 Kgs 15:17)
- Asa: “Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah; none was exempt: they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building; with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.” (1 Kgs 15:22)
- Omri: “He bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; he fortified the hill and called the city that he built Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill.” (1 Kgs 16:24)

The emphasis in these two books on kingly achievements is grounded in the royal ideology shared across the ancient Near East. Whenever the notices are reduced to mere information without glorifying rhetoric, the writers are critiquing and implicitly condemning the king in question.

The Mesha stele, which glorifies the achievements of this Moabite king, insists not only on the military victories he accomplishes in the name of his deity Kemosh but also on the construction or reconstruction of conquered and annexed cities:¹⁷

- line 9, construction of Baʿal-Meon and its reservoir
- lines 9–10, construction of Kiriathaim
- line 11, conquest of Ataroth fortified by Israel
- lines 14–15, conquest of Nebo

17. Joel Drinkard, “The Literary Genre of the Meshaʿ Inscription,” in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* (ed. J. Andrew Dearman; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 153–54.

- lines 18–19, conquest of Jahaz fortified by Israel
- line 21, reconstruction of Qarhō, the capital, and its walls, gates, towers, palace, reservoir, and cistern
- line 26, construction of Aroer
- line 27, reconstruction of Beth-Bamoth and of Bezer
- line 30, construction of Medeba, Beth-Diblathaim, and Beth Baʿal-Meon
- lines 31–32, conquest of Horonaim

The rhetoric of the Mesha stele places particular emphasis on cities conquered, built, and rebuilt. By mentioning explicitly the conquest of two cities that had been fortified by his enemy, the king of Israel, it becomes clear that what is at stake is not so much tribute and booty but cities to be (re)consecrated to the divinity Kemosh, cities “given” according to the divine word (lines 14, 32) and therefore offered back by the king to the divinity.

Similarly, the stele of Zakkur, king of Hamath and Luath, highlights the importance of cities in the theology of conquest.¹⁸ Zakkur, the victim of a coalition of 16 neighboring kings led by Bar-Hadad son of Hazael of Damascus, implores his god Baʿalshamayin for protection, who then delivers him and stands by him (lines 2–3). The enemies are listed as the king raises his hands in prayer. Baʿalshamayin assures him not to fear because he stands with him, to deliver him (lines 13–14). In the second part of the inscription, the cities that Zakkur has taken care to rebuild are listed. It is clear, therefore, that cities played a vital role in the discourse of royal glorification in both Mesopotamia and the Levantine kingdoms during the first millennium.

However, it appears that this conceptualization of royal and divine cities has at times been criticized, or rather that the self-glorification of the kings who built cities for themselves has been criticized. M. van de Mieroop has underlined the latter trait in some of the literature from the time of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.E.)¹⁹ While the *Geography of Sargon* clearly glorifies the king and so reflects the common ideology sketched above that was used in royal inscriptions throughout the ancient Near East, the same may not be said concerning the famous Weidner Chronicle, which critiques the building of the new capital city, Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad). Should not this construction effort have been a divine work for the glory of the gods? In glorifying himself, has not Sargon stolen what belongs to the gods? This accusation of blasphemy is interpreted as the cause of divine punishment that took the form of many revolts across the Assyrian Empire, from west to east, and even the impious

18. John C. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* (3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1971–82) 2:6–17.

19. Marc van de Mieroop, “Literature and Political Discourse: Sargon II and Sargon of Agade,” in *Munuscula Mesopotamica* (ed. Johannes Renger; AOAT 267; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1999) 327–38.

death of the king on a military campaign.²⁰ His sin is *hubris*. Sargon died and Sennacherib, his successor, moved the capital city to Nineveh. Dur-Sharrukin was left abandoned, punished by the gods and wept over by the goddesses, as had occurred earlier in the Old Babylonian City Laments.²¹

In a similar way, judgment of cities is found in the Bible.²² Contrary to the Mesopotamian conceptualization, however, in the Bible cities are not an original divine gift but the consequence of human sin. In need of protection and security, Cain builds the first biblical city:

Cain said to YHWH, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me." Then YHWH said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And YHWH put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him. Then Cain went away from the presence of YHWH and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city and named it Enoch after his son Enoch. (Gen 4:13–17)

But are that vision and its condemnation the norm in the Bible? It seems the conceptualization in the Bible is more complex and somewhat ambiguous, depending on the books and corpus being read.²³ The deuteronomic law for the Conquest illustrates this complexity:

20. Ibid., 337.

21. Pascal Attinger, *La lamentation sur Sumer et Ur* (2.2.3) (February, 2009). On-line: http://www.iaw.unibe.ch/unibe/philhist/ifaw/content/e246526/e255000/e274658/e274665/e379923/e379942/2_2_3.pdf; and Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989) 43. For the symbolism of "de-created" cities, see also Daria Pezzoli-Olgianti, "Images of Cities in Ancient Religions: Some Methodological Considerations," in *Society of Biblical Literature 2000 Seminar Papers: One Hundred Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting, November 17–21, 2000* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 80–102.

22. "Lorsqu'ils [les Hébreux] ont été en contact avec la ville, ce fut en étrangers. Et la ville ne leur a guère été favorable. C'est Sodome et Gomorrhe d'où ils sont obligés de fuir. C'est la ville de Salem où arrive la désastreuse histoire de la séduction de Dinah. C'est l'ensemble des villes de la race d'Ésaü (Gn 36) et dans lesquelles Jacob ne peut séjourner. C'est enfin la ville de Pharaon où Joseph est captif. Captivité de Joseph qui bientôt s'étend à tout le peuple élu. Partout Israël a été séparé de la ville, partout il y a séjourné en passant, mais a dû la quitter, il ne participe pas à sa création, il ne participe pas à son esprit, il est réellement un corps étranger qui n'y a pas sa place et, bientôt, il doit s'en retrancher" (Jacques Ellul, *Sans feu ni lieu: Signification biblique de la Grande Ville* [Paris: Gallimard, 1975] 62). See also Albert de Pury, "La ville dans les traditions patriarcales," in *La Ville dans le Proche-Orient ancien: Actes du Colloque de Cartigny, 15–17 juin 1979, Université de Genève, Centre d'Études du Proche-Orient Ancien* (ed. Françoise Brüscheweiler et al.; Centre d'étude du Proche-Orient Ancien 1; Leuven: Peeters, 1983) 219–29.

23. Lester Grabbe, "Sup-Urbs or Only Hyp-Urbs? Prophets and Populations in Ancient Israel and Socio-Historical Method," in "Every City Shall Be Forsaken": Ur-

When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it accepts your terms of peace and surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you in forced labor. If it does not submit to you peacefully but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when YHWH your God gives it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword. You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, livestock, and everything else in the town, all its spoil. You may enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which YHWH your God has given you. Thus you shall treat all the towns that are very far from you, which are not towns of the nations here. But as for the towns of these peoples that YHWH your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—just as YHWH your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against YHWH your God. (Deut 20:10–18)

While many cities are destroyed (Jericho or Ai in Josh 6:18–24), others are occupied after their goods are destroyed (Deut 3:2–5, 7:2, 20:17). Cities of refuge, on the other hand, represent instruments of salvation. Therefore, the status of cities in the Bible may not be generalized.

Leaving the scope of conceptualization, let us now turn to the images and personification of cities. This personification is found primarily in prophetic texts, especially in the oracles against the nations (OAN) in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In Isaiah, the OAN appear in chaps. 13–23, are followed by the so-called Isaiah apocalypse (Isaiah 24–27), and end with the hope of Israel's victory (Isaiah 28–35). Chapters 36–39 constitute a historical narrative about Sennacherib's campaign against Judahite cities and the salvation of Jerusalem. This narrative clearly links Second and Third Isaiah (chaps. 40–66) to First Isaiah (chaps. 1–39). The structure of First Isaiah as a whole is significant; it forms an arch from judgment to promise. It is helpful to grasp the place of the OAN in this architecture, so I will outline the section here fully:²⁴

1. Doom of Judah and Jerusalem but hope of the prophet (Isaiah 1–12)
 - 1.1. YHWH's trial with Israel (1:2–5:7)

banism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 95–123 (see p. 121).

24. This understanding of the book's architectural structure draws heavily on Jacques Vermeylen's proposals ("Isaïe le visionnaire: La montée vers l'accomplissement de l'ordre du monde dans le livre d'Isaïe," in *Les prophètes de la Bible et la fin des temps, XXIII^e congrès de l'Association catholique française pour l'étude de la Bible [Lille, 24–27 août 2009]* [ed. Jacques Vermeylen; Paris: du Cerf, 2010] 17–71). However, I have adapted and interpreted them in light of the issue of cities.

- a. Sons spoiled and unfaithful (1:2), daughter Zion left and distasteful (1:8), an adulteress (1:21) but meant to “be redeemed by judgment” (1:27) and called ‘city of justice, faithful city’ (עִיר הַצֶּדֶק קָרִיָה נְאֻמָּה).
- b. Promise that Zion will become an exalted and universal capital (2:1–5)
- c. Land full of idols and men abased; YHWH alone is exalted (2:6–22)
- d. Judgment on the people’s leaders (3:1–15)
- c’. Daughters of Zion abased (3:16–4:1)
- b’. Promise that Zion will become a glorious shelter for the survivors of Israel (4:2–6)
- a’. Song of the Vineyard loved but unfaithful, called into judgment and destroyed (5:1–7)
- 1.2. “From Death to Birth” (5:8–10:19)
 - a. Mourning oracle over injustice (5:8–24)
 - b. YHWH’s anger (5:25–30)
 - c. Book of Immanuel (6:1–9:6)
 - b’. YHWH’s anger (9:7–20)
 - a’. Mourning oracle over injustice followed by God’s anger and instrumentalization of Assyria (10:1–19)
- 1.3. The remnant of Israel (10:20–11:16)
 - a. The remnant of Israel (10:20–27)
 - b. Sennacherib’s offensive against different cities as the army advances and daughter Zion (10:28–34)
 - a’. The shoot of Jesse and rule of Immanuel (11:1–16)
- 2. Oracles against the nations (Isaiah 13–27)
- 2.1. The end of Babylon (13:1–14:23),²⁵ capital of an empire of pride and evil (13:11), compared to Sodom and Gomorrah (13:19), its soldiers like a woman in labor pains (13:8),²⁶ its king going down to She’ol (14:9), a trampled corpse (14:19)
- 2.2. Doom over other nations (14:24–23:18)

25. Babylon is feminine in Hebrew, whereas it is masculine in Akkadian and addressed in the masculine singular, as in the *Enuma Elish*.

26. This metaphor of the pangs and labor of childbirth is frequent in descriptions of impending invasions or fear of YHWH (Isa 13:8, 21:3, 23:4–5, 26:17–18, 45:10, 54:1, 66:7–8; Jer 6:24, 13:21, 22:23, 50:43, 51:29; Ezek 30:16; Mic 4:9–10; Zech 9:5; Hab 3:10; Pss 29:8–9, 48:7, 77:17, 96:9, 97:4, 114:7).

- Introduction with Assyria (14:27) and Philistia addressed as a feminine city (14:28–32) ending in the blessing of Zion for “in her the afflicted of [the Lord’s] people find refuge” (14:32)
- a. Moab (15–16)
 - b. Damascus (17:1–11)
 - c. Roaring of many nations as they fall and disappear (17:12–14)
 - d. Kush and Egypt (18–19:15)
 - e. Israel blessing for Egypt and Assyria (19:16–25)
 - d’. Egypt and Kush (chap. 20)
 - c’. Fall of nations, Babylon, Edom, Arabia (chap. 21)
 - b’. Jerusalem called here “Valley of Vision” (chap. 22)
 - a’. Tyre and Sidon (chap. 23)
- 2.3. Apocalypse (chap. 24)
- a. The earth laid waste (24:1–6)
 - b. The ‘city of chaos’ (24:10, קְרִית חָדָו) is but ruin (24:7–13): the earth gives praise (24:14–16a)
 - a’. End of the earth and Day of YHWH (24:16b–23): YHWH reigns on mount Zion and in Jerusalem
- 2.4. Praise of God and promises to Israel (chaps. 25–27)
- a. Praise of YHWH, who has turned “the city into a heap, the fortified city (קְרִיָה בְצוּרָה) into a ruin,” never to be rebuilt, and who is a refuge to the poor (25:1–5)
 - b. Banquet for all peoples “on this mountain” and destruction of death forever (25:6–8)
 - a. Two songs of praise: (1) praise of salvation (25:9–12); (2) praise of the strong city and the faithful nation (26:1–19)
 - b. Day of the Lord (26:20–27:1)
 - a. Song of the Vineyard (27:2–9)
 - b. Two promises: (1) The fortified city will be abandoned (27:10–11); (2) The Sons of Israel will worship YHWH on his holy mountain, Jerusalem (27:12–13)

The first section (1.1), and one could even say the first unit (a) of that section (vv. 1–27), appears as a *mise en abîme* (infinite recursion) of all of First Isaiah (chaps. 1–35). The unit announces Jerusalem’s salvation, even though the first section ends with its destruction (5:1–7). From the very beginning, Jerusalem is depicted as a woman and, more particularly, the mountain of Zion.²⁷ Zion is

27. As noted by John Schmitt, “there is no extended picture of Jerusalem as a woman in chapter 1, but the two images of whore and daughter together set the stage

called “daughter” (1:8) but also can be represented by her “daughters” (3:16–4:1). Whether woman or daughter, she shows the same unfaithfulness and blatant rebellion.

From the start, one may underline a tension concerning the idea of the city, which is both negative (are not Sodom and Gomorrah also mentioned in 1:9–10 and Sodom alone in 3:9?) and affectionate or at least filial, with the reference to “daughter(s).” Beyond their grammatical gender, however, Sodom and Gomorrah are not portrayed as women in this unit; the developed metaphor is reserved for Jerusalem. As a woman, she seems to embody the faithlessness and rebellion of the whole nation and the sons of God.

As the second part of the OAN begin, it is clear that the nations, under the guise of Assyria, have already been introduced. Assyria and its king Sennacherib appear as instruments of YHWH’s anger, caused by unfaithfulness but more explicitly by social injustice.²⁸ At the core of this judgment stands the image of Immanuel and his rule of peace, or YHWH himself dwelling in Zion, as the concluding song of praise makes clear: “for great in [her] midst is the Holy One of Israel” (12:1–6)! Apart from the first section, the image of Zion as woman is not prominently developed, though the final song resounds like her voice.²⁹

The OAN unsurprisingly contain many references to cities. In the oracles against Moab (15–16), cities are called “daughter(s)” (15:2, 16:2),³⁰ and Dibon plays a feminine role in weeping and lamenting over Moab’s destruction.³¹ Moreover, Moab is invited to find refuge on the “mount of daughter Zion” (16:1). However, its pride being too great, Moab is finally degraded and its people reduced to a remnant (16:14). Cities are also mentioned in the oracle against Damascus (17:1, 2, 9) but without developed images of a woman,³² and also in the oracles against Egypt (19:2, 18) without further development.³³ The

for the rest of Isaiah 1–39. The whore image is a harsh critique; the daughter image suggests affection” (“The City as Woman in Isaiah 1–39,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah* [ed. Craig Broyles and Craig Evans; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997] 95–119 [quoting p. 98]).

28. In the description of the advance of Sennacherib’s army toward daughter Zion, the cities and villages mentioned are also personified; they cry and shriek in flight (10:27–32).

29. As understood by Schmitt, “clearly, both the prophet and the tradition after him recognized the city as feminine and chose the individual feminine imagery according to the specific moment and its needs” (“City as Woman,” 102).

30. In 15:2, the MT reads “the house and Dibon.” “Daughter Dibon” is emended according to Jer 48:18, which seems to be a reworking of that oracle.

31. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993) 100–105.

32. Though, in 17:10–11 a feminine singular is addressed. Schmitt argues here for the identification of the city as Jerusalem vs. Damascus or Samaria because of the accusation to “have forgotten God, your savior” (“City as Woman,” 105).

33. Interestingly, the Egyptians who are full of dread are compared to women “trembling with fear, because YHWH of hosts is shaking his fist at them” (19:16)!

oracle against Jerusalem called “Valley of Vision” (22:1, 5) is certainly the most interesting. Jerusalem is called *חֲשָׁאוֹת מְלָאָה עִיר הוֹמָה קְרִיָּה עֲלִיזָה* ‘city full of noise and chaos, wanton town’ (22:2) and also “daughter of my people” (22:4). However, as is the case in the preceding oracles, she is not personified as a female. Tyre and Sidon (chap. 23), on the contrary, both receive developed feminine roles: Sidon has not been in labor and has not given birth to young men and virgins (23:4), and Tyre goes about as a forgotten harlot (23:16).

This overall review of the OAN shows that while nations might be condemned, the developed depictions are of deurbanized cities rather than gendered metaphors of feminine rebellion and depravity. These oracles apparently belong to a literary stratum that refers to cities in their feminine gender. Sometimes, the writers allow them to play a feminine role as well, even though fully developed metaphors are not used.

The Isaiah apocalypse may be divided into two parts: the first (chap. 24), which spans the destruction of the city to the reign of YHWH in Jerusalem, is expanded in the second (chaps. 25–27) with songs of praise and promises. The same topic is addressed in both parts: the destruction of the city and the everlasting and glorious reign of YHWH on his holy mountain, Jerusalem. The city of chaos (24:10), the fortified city (25:2, 27:10), is never named; it could refer to any city, even Jerusalem.³⁴ The latter interpretation would facilitate the deliberate opposition set up between the ‘strong city’ (*עִיר עֹז*) of the faithful nation and the ‘lofty city’ (*קְרִיָּה נִשְׁגָּבָה*) brought down in Isa 26:1–5. But again, it is noteworthy that no developed female images are found, except that the vineyard in 27:2–3, which usually is masculine in Hebrew, here is feminine.

The following section (chaps. 28–35) marks the transition from judgment to promise: YHWH alone is the salvation of Israel and Judah. Jerusalem, called Ariel in this part (29:1, 2, 7), is not personified as a woman any more than in the preceding sections. However, the women of Jerusalem are singled out for their pride and complacency:

Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; you complacent daughters, listen to my speech. In little more than a year you will shudder, you complacent ones; for the vintage will fail, the fruit harvest will not come. Tremble, you women who are at ease, shudder, you complacent ones; strip, and make yourselves bare, and put sackcloth on your loins. Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine, for the soil of my people growing up in thorns and briers; yes, for all the joyous houses in the jubilant city. For the palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks; until a spirit from on high

34. For the different propositions that have been made, see Micaël Bürki, “City of Pride, City of Glory: The Opposition of Two Cities in Isaiah 24–27,” in *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27* (ed. J. Todd Hibbard and Paul Kim; SBLAIL 17; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013) 49–60.

is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest (32:9–15).

What can we gather from this review of the OAN in the larger literary context of First Isaiah? Two main points are apparent: first, the harshest judgment that can befall a city is, ironically, deurbanization, being a city no longer; abandoned, deserted, and a refuge of wild animals. Second, more than any other city mentioned, Jerusalem is personified as a woman. The first point underlines to some degree the ambiguity associated with the concept of city and more broadly, of civilization. The second point is directly germane to the question of cities as gendered sites of memory, our primary concern in this contribution. Whether Jerusalem is the foremost city that has been personified as a woman in various ways (name, address, roles) in the texts of the Hebrew Bible, building on the fact that cities are feminine grammatically, needs further investigation. Let us finish reviewing the OAN by examining their development in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

In Jeremiah, the location of these oracles varies according to the version read; a long and a short textual form of the book are attested.³⁵ The short Septuagint version (also attested to by the Qumran scrolls)³⁶ has a structure similar to the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah: the oracles are placed at its center:³⁷

Jeremiah 1:4–25:13a, Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem

Jeremiah 25:13b–38 + 46–51, Oracles against the nations

Jeremiah 26–35, triumph of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 30–33) framed by narratives concerning Jeremiah's suffering

Jeremiah 36–45 + 52, Historical and biographical narratives

35. Louis Stulman, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah: A Redescription of the Correspondences with Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-Critical Research* (SBLDS 83; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); Alexander Rofé, "The Name YHWH SEBA'OT and the Shorter Recension of Jeremiah," in *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel* (ed. Siegfried Herrmann; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991) 307–16; Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, "Vie et paroles de Jérémie selon Baruch. Le texte court de Jérémie (LXX) comme oeuvre biographique," in *La parola edifica la comunità, Liber amicorum offerto al padre Jacques Dupont in occasione del suo 80. compleanno e del 60. anniversario di professione monastica* (ed. Enzo Bianchi et al.; Magnano (Biella): Qiqajon-Comunità di Bose, 1996) 15–29.

36. At least two textual forms seem to be attested by the scrolls: 2QJer and 4QJer^c are close to the MT along with 4QJer^a, 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d, on the other hand, are closer to the LXX. See Emanuel Tov, "The Jeremiah Scrolls from Cave 4," *Revue de Qumran* 14 (1989) 189–207; and "L'incidence de la critique textuelle sur la critique littéraire dans le livre de Jérémie," *RB* 79 (1972) 189–99.

37. For simplicity, the numeration follows the MT.

The longer form attested in the MT is structured in the following way:³⁸

- Jeremiah 1–24, Visions, oracles of judgment and lamentations
- Jeremiah 25–36, Sermons and narratives, consolation in Jeremiah 30–33
- Jeremiah 37–45, Biographical narratives
- Jeremiah 46–51, Oracles against nations
- Jeremiah 52, Destruction of Jerusalem and exile

The main difference between the MT version and the previous LXX version is the displacement of the oracles of the nations to second-to-last position from second position. They no longer are the central pivot leading from the judgment against Israel and Judah to their triumph and salvation; they are final, just before the destruction of Jerusalem. In these oracles against Egypt (chap. 46), Philistia (chap. 47), Moab (chap. 48), Ammon, Edom, Arabia, and Elam (chap. 49), and finally Babylon (chaps. 50–51), cities are humiliated, desolate and deurbanized.³⁹ But beyond the hints of feminine gender that appear sporadically,⁴⁰ no developed images of a woman appear.

The same is the case in the book of Ezekiel. The oracles against the nations span chaps. 25–32 (Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Phoenicia, and Egypt) and precede oracles about the restoration of Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, with the return of the divine glory (Ezekiel 33–48). Again, cities are mentioned,⁴¹ but no female personification is undertaken,⁴² except in the case of Tyre (28:12–19).

However, in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, just as in Second and Third Isaiah, there is no doubt that Jerusalem is eminently depicted as a woman beyond the question of gender, name, or even role played.⁴³ As already seen, feminine

38. Alexander Rofé, "The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989) 390–98 (p. 395).

39. Jer 46:14, 25; 47:1, 2, 4, 5, 7; 48:1–5, 8–9, 13, 18–24, 32, 34, 36, 45; 49:1–3, 7–8, 13, 18, 23–24, 27–28, 30, 33; 50:1–2, etc.

40. Egypt, which is not a city, is called "virgin daughter" (46:11) or "daughter" (46:19, 24), and Babylon, a proper city, is called "daughter" (51:33). Note also that, in the oracles against Babylon, the grammatical feminine is frequently used to refer to the sin and shame of the city.

41. Ezek 25:5, 9, 13; 26:1–4, 7, 17, 19; 27:2–3, 8, 11–25; 28:1, 20, etc.

42. Note again that daughter cities of Tyre are mentioned (26:6).

43. Christl Maier, "Zion's Body as a Site of God's Motherhood in Isaiah 66:7–14," in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (ed. Mark Boda et al.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012) 225–42; Mark Biddle, "Lady Zion's Alter Egos: Isaiah 47.1–15 and 57.6–13 as Structural Counterparts," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy Melugin; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996) 124–39; Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as YHWH's Wife* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); John Sawyer, "Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison," *JSOT* 44 (1989) 89–107; Barbara Kaiser, "Poet as 'Female Impersonator': The Image

roles may be given to cities without female metaphorical development. What is at stake here is the particular status of Jerusalem, daughter Zion;⁴⁴ not because of her name and grammatical gender, nor because she receives here and there feminine roles, but because her personifications as a woman are developed and form the texture of a story, her story. That is why it seems important to offer some kind of classification of those developed images and not just a catalog enumerating them.⁴⁵ F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp has recalled the definition of personification (“a trope wherein an object, abstraction, or other inanimate or non-sentient entity or force is endowed with features of animal or human life and movement”) and has emphasized that personification could be effected in various ways.⁴⁶ In the ensuing section, I detail these different ways and show that from one step to the next the degree of personification varies and augments:

- locally, without much elaboration, as in a major city being called “mother” (= “metropolis”) and the surrounding cities “daughters” (2 Sam 20:19, Ezek 30:18)
- by simple address, as in Ps 122:6, where one is invited to “salute Jerusalem”
- more elaborately, as in Amos 5:2, where Israel is not only called “maiden” but a dirge is sung unto her; not only the qualification but the literary genre of the dirge refers to the personified Israel
- by the attribution of speech, as in Lam 2:20–22
- by signature elements of a woman’s physical anatomy, as in Ezek 16:7
- by dress and adornment (Jer 4:30–31, Ezek 16:10–13)

of Daughter Zion as Speaker in Biblical Poems of Suffering,” *Journal of Religion* 67 (1987) 164–82.

44. Dobbs-Allsopp has argued that the most common expression *bat* + geographical name, as attested elsewhere in Semitic languages, refers to the inhabitants of the place and that the singular may be understood as a collective: “The biblical poets, then, have taken a common way of referring to a woman from a certain place (lit. ‘daughter of GN’) and used it as part of the repertoire of tropes by which they effect the literary personification” (“Daughter Zion,” 129). So also, Michael Floyd, “The Daughter of Zion Goes Fishing in Heaven,” in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (ed. Mark Boda et al.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012) 177–200.

45. G. Baumann argues that each biblical book offers its own version of the metaphor. In Isaiah, Jerusalem is daughter Zion, whereas in Jeremiah daughters more generally are highlighted and in Ezekiel, sisters. Other images are found and analyzed in Mic 1:5–7:13, 7:8–10; Nah 3:4–7; Zeph 3:14–17, 9:9; Zech 2:14, 5:5–11, 9:9; Mal 1:2, 2:10–16 (“Connected by Marriage, Adultery and Violence: The Prophetic Marriage Metaphor in the Book of the Twelve and in the Major Prophets,” in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1999 Seminar Papers, 135 Annual Meeting, November 20–23, 1999, Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999] 552–69).

46. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter Zion,” 125.

- by role (“mother,” Lam 1:5; 2:22; “daughter,” Ezek 23:2; “wife,” Ezek 16:32; “queen,” Isa 47:5, 62:3; “widow,” Isa 47:8–9, Lam 1:1)
- by life experiences such as giving birth (Isa 66:6–11) or being raped (Jer 6:1–8, 13:20–27; Isa 47:1–4; Nah 3:5–6)

Interestingly in the OAN, almost every case has been attested and though the degree of personification augments with the feminine role given, I would say that the personification is most effective when the role is not only assigned but also played. For example, Sidon and Tyre may have been attributed the roles of mother and harlot, but they do not play either role in the contexts where they appear. Different in that sense seems to be the character of Jerusalem; her personification seems to bring her character to life.

What are those developed images? As various as they may be—daughter in 2 Kgs 19:21 for example, virgin in Isa 37:22, bride in Isa 62:3, harlot in Jer 2:20, menstruant in Lamentations 1, and mother in Isa 66:8—they seem to respond to the evolution of life from childhood to full motherhood. Jerusalem grows into a young woman who becomes a rebel and prostitute, who is rejected and despised, widowed and bereaved, before she is chosen again and espoused, as though some divine pedagogy is at work regarding the chosen city. This seems to constitute the very core of the process of memorialization. What is unparalleled is not the personification of cities, since this is a common literary device, nor that cities are feminine, because they are so grammatically, but that recurring images of Jerusalem appear from her childhood to her status as a fully grown woman, providing the texture of a life and history. Other cities are depicted as a woman, particularly Babylon, but none become as vivid as Jerusalem *in their feminine life*. Jerusalem’s full and coherent story seems nothing less than the story of the love of God for his chosen one. Her being brought fully to life, in contrast with other cities that are personified as women to a much lesser degree, seems to me to exemplify the process of memorialization by Judean authors of this city that had served as the seat of its former human kings and deity. They employ a narrative extending over a number of the biblical books in which the city serves as a character who experiences pain and sorrow but also joy as her “life” unfolds.

In conclusion, it appears that cities in the ancient Near East, particularly in Mesopotamia, were conceptualized according to both divine and royal ideology. Like temples, cities are divine gifts of the gods from the beginning of time and endowed with their divine glory. They are also the object of special care from their kings, who serve as mediators between the human and divine realms. These characteristics are found to some extent in West-Semitic sources and in archaeological and epigraphical material known today. Though the personification of cities may be attested in those sources, it is unusual and limited to the particular genre of lamentations. The conceptualization of cities in the Bible offers a contrastive comparison that highlights the radical theological

difference: cities are human creations, not divine in origin, and feminine names or images are often used to refer to various cities. However, the city of Jerusalem stands apart in that process of personification and metaphorization, for the different images lead to a full life story. This phenomenon seems best explained as the result of the memorization of the city's history along with the poetic genius of the redactors in the final stages of the text.

PART 2
CROSSING THE GATES AND ENTERING
INTO THE CITY (OF MEMORY):
MEMORIES OF URBAN PLACES AND SPACES

Testing Entry: The Social Functions of City Gates in Biblical Memory

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The city gate in ancient Israel was a focal point for a number of vital social purposes: among them, security (Gen 19:1, Judg 16:2–3), commercial transaction (2 Kgs 7:1; Amos 5:10, 15), and legal adjudication (Deut 21:15, 19; 22:24; 25:7). In addition to these, we can presume that a host of informal social interactions and transactions also occurred at the gate in the manner of bartering, gossip, the sharing of news and practical information from abroad, such as weather and travel conditions, and so on (1 Sam 4:18, 2 Sam 18:25–26, 1 Kgs 17:10). During Iron Age Judah, city gates were part of the fortification system of the walled city. They were also lookout posts for monitoring the security of the wider region surrounding the city, a focal point for military challenge, and a gathering hub for commercial transactions of varying kinds.

In the province of Yehud in the Persian period (538–332 B.C.E.), however, most of the settlements were unwalled, rural villages lacking gates, with Jerusalem being the notable exception.¹ Hence, the presence of city gates in the literary traditions of law and narrative, but not in the material culture of the period, facilitated the use of cultural memory in shaping the social identity of the Yehud community in the present. In other words, the city gate of memory helped to construct Yehud's own self-understanding as a community and its boundaries in determining who belonged "inside the gates" and, just as important, who did not. With the aid of current work in cultural memory and ritual theory on liminality, this essay probes how the city gate functioned symbolically in marking social status shifts and in the reimagining of Israel's social identity long after actual physical city gates had been destroyed by the Babylonian army in 586 B.C.E. The gate of memory, then, is essentially what Jan

Author's note: My thanks to Ehud Ben Zvi for some helpful comments he shared with me.

1. Kenneth Hoglund, "The Achaemenid Context," in *Second Temple Studies*, vol. 1: *Persian Period* (ed. Philip R. Davies; JSOTSup 117; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 54–68; Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 215.

Assmann has termed a “counterfactual memory,” that is, a symbolic construal that keeps present a past *different* from the actual experiences of the present.² One facet of cultural memory worth keeping in mind is that it often has more to do with legitimating a *present* social order and can have little to do with the historical past.³

Security

Gates were the focal point of entry into a walled city. In its most basic sense, of course, the gate represented the security system of the city inhabitants, as both the archaeological and biblical materials indicate. Unfortified villages characterized the hill country regions of Samaria and Judah in the Iron I period, though dwellings could be grouped as a belt around a central area to afford some degree of fortification and protection. Cities in the southern Levant in the Iron II period, by contrast, were frequently fortified with walls and gates, though the alternative pattern of a belt of houses still persisted inland.⁴ The gates themselves were often elaborate, substantial structures, lined with either four or six chambers and preceded by a bent-axis approach. Six-chambered gates are evident at Gezer, Lachish, Megiddo, Hazor, Ashdod, and Tel 'Ira.⁵ Gates typically had double doors to accommodate chariots and were made of wood with plated metal, inner gates, pilasters, and towers nearby or adjacent.⁶ Overall, these systems worked to slow traffic and allow the inspection of visitors. It also fostered social interaction. Megiddo is a city that initially was protected by a belt of dwellings and later, by a chambered gate system. In Stratum VA, the settlement was surrounded by a belt of houses without any freestanding walls, while in Stratum IVB, there was an offset-and-inset wall and a six-chambered gate system.⁷ Because most cities sat atop mounds, the gate was a natural lookout post, and the strength of a city was demonstrated by its fortification system.

The posting of the heads or bodies of vanquished enemies at or on the gates for all to see is a graphic, symbolic gesture that signals a city's strength. This happens to the King of 'Ai; Joshua “commanded, and they took his body down

2. Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005) 53.

3. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 2.

4. Ze'ev Herzog, “Cities,” in *ABD* 1:1031–43 (p. 1037).

5. For illustrations, see idem, “Settlement and Fortification Planning in the Iron Age,” in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992) 231–74 (p. 266).

6. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 234.

7. Herzog, “Settlement and Fortification Planning,” 265.

from the tree and cast it at the entrance of the city gate and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day” (Josh 8:29). In the final purging of the northern, Omride dynasty, the gate is where the remains of Ahab’s descendants are displayed: “When the messenger came and told him, ‘They have brought the heads of the king’s sons,’ he said, ‘Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until the morning’” (2 Kgs 10:8). The head of Holofernes is deposited near the gate too, after Judith has taken it (Jdt 8:32, 13:11–12, 14:1). These gruesome gate displays were undoubtedly deterrents to aggression by any would-be visitors; they sent the unmistakable message of the consolidated power of the insiders.

As noted in the introduction, most of the actual gates and walls of the cities of Judah were gone in the Persian period. Many scholars maintain that the gates of Jerusalem, though, were rebuilt in the period. According to the book of Nehemiah, when Nehemiah first arrived in Yehud from Susa, he inspected the gates and the broken down walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:11–15) and then had them rebuilt (Neh 3:1, 3, 6, 13, 28–29, 31).⁸

There is evidence that the sites of Tell en Naṣbeh and Ramat Raḥel were important administrative centers in postexilic Judah. Ramat Raḥel was a fortified (and highly “beautified”) administrative center whose importance is attested by the large cache of seal impressions found there.⁹

8. The debate concerning the walls of Jerusalem in the Persian period continues. See, for instance, E. Mazar, “The Wall that Nehemiah Built,” *BAR* 35/2 (2009) 24–33, 66; O. Lipschits, “Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations,” *JHS* 9/20 (2009). On-line http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_122.pdf; also published under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VI: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* (ed. E. Ben Zvi; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009) 423–53; I. Finkelstein, “Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder,” *JHS* 9/24 (2009). On-line: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_126.pdf; also published under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VI: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* (ed. E. Ben Zvi; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009) 529–42; and D. Ussishkin, “The Borders and De Facto Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 147–66; and see the bibliographies of these works.

9. There are a significant number of recent publications on Ramat Raḥel. See, e.g., O. Lipschits and D. S. Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) and the bibliography there. On Tell en Naṣbeh, see, e.g., J. R. Zorn, “Tell en-Naṣbeh and the Problem of the Material Culture of the 6th Century,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and J. Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 413–47. Zorn maintains that “during the leveling operations that created the surface for Stratum 2, the old inner-outer double gate complex that defended the entrance to the Stratum 3 was partially dismantled. . . . The inner 4-chamber gate went out of use, as did the western wall that connected the two

In any event, for the population of Yehud, these biblical memories of city gates carried many of the same associations—namely, security, trade, legal judgment, and social interaction—that the architectural gate area had borne in Iron II Israel, or they were pressed into service in the creation of such memories.¹⁰ The gate of memory functioned as a means to delimit communal inclusion and exclusion. In Assmann's words, "The past is needed because it imparts togetherness. The group acquires its identity as a group by reconstructing its past togetherness."¹¹ The glory of past walled cities and the vanquishing of enemies, then, would have fostered a civic pride and a collective sense in Yehud of having a shared history. And so, for instance, staking Holofernes's head at the gate symbolized both Judith/Yehud's imagined military might and that this foreign general did not belong "inside" the boundaries of the community.

Narrative displays of military might either in preparation for or in battle happen near the gate as a means to convey the protection of social boundaries. The contest for Shechem under Abimelech's able leadership is decided at the city's gate (Judg 9:35, 40, 44), as is the Danite taking of the priest Micah (Judg 18:16–17) and the contest with the Ammonites (2 Sam 10:8).

Uriah the Hittite is the unfortunate victim of a military siege of the enemy's gate but also of David's betrayal in setting him up at that gate. Uriah is expelled from his home community because David wanted his wife, Bathsheba. In this case, the enemy gate of Rabbah shields the real enemy of Uriah, his own king, who will "expel" him by having him killed: "The messenger said to David, 'The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field; but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate'" (2 Sam 11:23). A series of thresholds are at play in this story. Symbolically, it is *as if* the Hittite came close to belonging, in his valiant and virtuous service in the army, abstaining from wine and sex during his enlistment. Uriah came close to being an inside member of Israel but in the end was denied entry. His death outside the gate enables David's entrance into Uriah's home and the taking of his wife. Uriah's expulsion from King David's Israel is a certainty, but his killing at a gate, even the enemy's gate, highlights his exclusion from his home city by his own king. David, if it is not already clear, is one ruthless king.

The presence of the king at the gate has strong military associations (2 Sam 18:4, 24–33; 2 Kgs 22:10). Absalom appears at the gate in order to hear legal disputes, but it is ostensibly to vie to replace David as king; he has hostile, military intent (2 Sam 15:2). These stories of the monarchy's military

gates; only the outer 2-chamber gate remained in use. . . . the need for building space outweighed defensive considerations under the Babylonian administration" (427–28).

10. Philip R. Davies, *On the Origins of Judaism* (London: Equinox, 2011) 59–66. Note that Deuteronomy, a book much read by this population, shapes both an image of the future land to be held by Israel at the level of the narration and of a past monarchic period in which towns have and are symbolized by gates.

11. Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 94.

action most likely would have had a double resonance for the Yehudite audience, who would be reminded both of Judah's past and also of Persian military might. These memories of Israel's monarchic past, then, worked implicitly toward accommodation with Persian imperial control. The mere awareness of the Persian army would be a factor in maintaining the stability and loyalty of citizens of Yehud.¹² Even King David's behavior at the gate, when he weeps over Absalom instead of leading like a sovereign ruler, would have discouraged nostalgia for the monarchy and perhaps any nascent messianic aspirations in Yehud (2 Sam 19:1). The shared memory of kings and armies is a connective one: it forms, in Ehud Ben Zvi's view, a connective tissue—horizontally—within the community sharing it, and—vertically—to the previous generations that had lived in monarchic Judah.¹³

The security purpose of a gate is also demonstrated by its dramatic failures in biblical stories. The presumption of safety enables schemes of deceit. The Israelite spies breach the gate at Jericho with the help of Rahab (Josh 2:5–7). Samson is ambushed at Gaza's gate but then decides simply to grab their posts and move them, indicating that he cannot be tamed or taken by such measly security measures: "But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the gate of the city and the two posts and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is before Hebron" (Judg 16:2–3). The inadequacies of this coastal city's gates in the story might also hint at the superior distinctiveness of Yehud over that of its neighbors to the west.

Under King David, a series of assassinations occur at the gate. These are, in essence, the revenge killings of persons formerly loyal to King David, and so the victims are all caught off guard. First Abner: "And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he smote him in the belly so that he died for the blood of Asahel, his brother" (2 Sam 3:27). Later, Ishbaal, too, is assassinated at the gate, after the gate-keeper has fallen asleep (2 Sam 4:6). And last, even though Jezebel anticipates her death, Jehu enters through the gate and shouts up to have her thrown from the window to her death (2 Kgs 9:31). The dual thresholds of gate and window ensure that Jezebel is decidedly purged from Israel's social orbit.

In the case of Holofernes, Judith gains a deceptive entry through his threshold, which happens to be a tent. But, in planning her deception, Judith expressly

12. Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 134.

13. Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Memory of Abraham in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period Yehud," in *Bringing the Past to the Present in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Period: Images of Central Figures* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 1–44 (p. 5).

protects, albeit from afar, her own city gate: “Stand at the city gate tonight, and I will go out with my maid; and within the days after which you have promised to surrender the city to our enemies, YHWH will deliver Israel by my hand” (Jdt 8:33). She prevents Holofernes from ever entering her city gate by killing him in his tent. An interesting episode of insider exclusion happens with Eli the priest, who sits anxiously waiting to hear what has happened to the Ark (1 Sam 4:10–13). When the messenger returns, he bypasses Eli to go inform the general citizenry, the insiders, and pointedly not Eli, who then has to hear it secondhand. The audience knows at that point that Eli is no insider, having been ignored at the gate. All of these enemies of Israel have been forcibly expelled via the symbol of the gate.

Conferring Social Status

Physical entry was conferred or denied at the gate, but so, too, were a variety of social privileges enjoyed by those living within city walls. This represents another kind of entry, a social one, amidst the city inhabitants. In fact, the phrase “all who went in at the gate” (Gen 23:10) is virtually an idiom for citizen status. The freedom to go in and out at the city gate is an intramural one; it defines who is a constitutive part of the community. The simple act of walking through the gate at will is a citizen’s right only. It is the privilege of the insider to pass through without delay or suspicion. All others are deemed to be outsiders and are subject to scrutiny at the gate. The memory of gates encourages the broader maintenance of social order and its boundaries. This location at the gate, in biblical tradition, is where town elders decided legal matters,¹⁴ and it is likely that elders sat physically at the gate to judge matters. The archaeological evidence of city gates, such as, for example, at Gezer indicates their social importance. There, three benches line each side of the six-chambers of the gate, providing a total of eighteen benches, and this construction supports the notion that social gatherings at the gate were commonplace.¹⁵

On one level, the gate was where the city elders decided legal issues. On an ideological level, however, the gate marks social boundaries about who belongs inside, who counted as an insider in the larger community of Israel, and who was excluded. Upon hearing biblical examples of adjudication of legal disputes at the gate by elders, the community of Yehud would be encouraged to review its own social boundaries and legal parameters about what was permissible and what was not. The very social nature of legal arbitration of past

14. Frank S. Frick, *The City in Ancient Israel* (SBLDS 36; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1977); Timothy M. Willis, *The Elders of the City: A Study of the Elders-Laws in Deuteronomy* (SBLMS 55; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001) 8–31.

15. Stager and King, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 234.

elders reinforces the present community in forging its own values, so that its social order is legitimized by past legal history.

Entry through the city gate could be temporary, for the purpose of conducting business. Gates were a natural place of public assembly and a meeting center (Gen 19:1; Ruth 4:1; 2 Chr 32:6; Ps 69:13[12]; Job 29:7; Amos 5:10, 15). Decisions and treaties made at the city gate conferred a legal and binding weight not available if done in private. Abraham, for instance, formally purchases the cave of Machpelah from Ephron *not* at the actual cave site but *at the city gate*, where there are witnesses: "Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city" (Gen 23:10). The negotiations between the sons of Israel and the Shechemites are conducted, along with the mass circumcision, at the gate of Shechem (Gen 34:20–24). Certainly, there would have been any number of more private places to perform what the Shechemites had agreed to undergo, but the gate was a legal venue for a publicly witnessed and therefore binding agreement.

Temporary admittance to the city via the gate was also given to those seeking asylum. A fugitive seeking sanctuary could request it at the gate of select cities (Josh 20:7–9): "He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gates of the city and explain his case to the elders of that city; then they shall take him into the city and give him a place, and he shall remain with them" (Josh 20:4).¹⁶ In such cases, the individual became, by virtue of his admittance into the gate, a kind of honorary citizen of the city, privy to its protection and hospitality. His status was changed from fugitive-on-the run to housed, yet temporary citizen.

Because it is the place of legal resolution, the gate maintains social harmony, which is really an internal form of security. The judicial aim of settling disputes is primarily the preservation of community peace. In the instance of sanctuary/asylum, the gate acts to preserve the peace of another city. The crime or accusation of one city can be absorbed or neutralized by mercy in a way that it could not in the offender's home city. Refuge, then, is a kind of largesse that one city can practice at its gate for the sake of another city's integrity. Only an outside offender can be granted entry into a city of refuge. An inside offender who already dwells in a city of refuge would presumably have to flee to another. Otherwise, the peace of the city would remain disrupted. Entry through the gate is both protected and decided by the community, for purposes of maintaining the city's peace. For the permanent city residents, of course, entry through the gate undoubtedly would have signified a host of pleasant, affective associations about coming home. In their case, the gate merely solidified the status they enjoyed as part of the city's community.

16. For an insightful, cross-cultural analysis of the law of asylum in Deuteronomy 19, see Willis, *Elders of City*, 132–36.

Because the gate served as the focal point in delimiting the boundaries of the social orbit of the insider community, it also specifically marked a permanent change in particular sorts of social status within that community. In this role, the gate symbolizes what anthropologists, most notably V. Turner, term liminality. Liminality is the condition of uncertainty involved in a status transition. It is a threshold moment of the vulnerable, suspended state between a past status and one not yet secured. The gate, then, marks a psychic threshold of sorts, the in-between state inherent in status change. Liminality is particularly evident in cultural rites of passage, where marking social transitions occasions reflection over both the transition and the mystery outside the regularity of daily life. Social thresholds involve a host of changes that liminality highlights, such as a period of separation from the group, a time existing at the margins, and reaggregation into the social unit.¹⁷

The status of a person formally at the gate undergoes transition, even on the basic level of gaining entry or being denied. But in biblical tradition there are more subtle forms of risk-taking and risk-management when there are status changes effected at the gate. Liminality emphasizes the uncertainty, vulnerability, and risk involved for the social participants at the gate. Absalom's appearance at the gate highlights several key status shifts for both father and son. Absalom had come to the gate ostensibly to judge legal matters (2 Sam 15:2). He, therefore, assumed the traditional role of an elder, one given to maintaining communal peace. But his real role was to usurp the kingship and, therefore, to cause a tremendous social disturbance. Jerusalem, David his father, and Absalom himself are all vulnerable in this social threshold. There appear a series of swift changes in Absalom's status at this particular gate. He moves from elder to usurper, from son to traitor, and from contender to corpse, slain by David's (more) loyal army.

David also hears of Absalom's death at the city gate (2 Sam 18:33). The risk of social disorder remains great at this threshold. As Joab understands, David's public display is itself a near treasonous abandonment that tells his own soldiers that they, in effect, mean nothing to the king (2 Sam 19:1). The gate signifies the vulnerability of the city's leadership, as Absalom wants to usurp power and David is derelict in his duties as commander-in-chief. Liminality is the threshold of uncertainty involved in a transition. It occurs at the gate as it marks the change of status for Absalom, who, once dead, will no longer be king (or son), and of a possible status change for David as reigning king if he does not pull himself together and lead his army. He must shift his own status of father to that of commander-in-chief. Israel is at a precarious threshold at this point, though Joab is the only player able to recognize it.

17. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975) 231–42. Turner identifies three phases of a change in social status: (1) separation, (2) existing at the margins or threshold for a period of time, and (3) reaggregation into the social unit (pp. 231–32).

Legal decisions about who was to be expelled from the community were made at the gate and this is certainly no coincidence. Many laws are stipulated in Deuteronomy, but the ones that specifically mention the city gate all deal with the potential exclusion of a social member (Deut 21:15, 19; 22:24, 25:7).¹⁸ They are laws that detail a change in social relations between persons and the maintenance of wider social order. Further, the elders are involved in adjudicating legal outcomes. The elders represent the community as a whole and determine when an individual has to be excluded, as in the cases of Deut 21:19 and 22:24, or included, as in the case of Ruth, as we shall see later. Hence, when the elders impose the sentence of stoning an offender at the gate, that offender is being symbolically expelled from the city. In deuteronomic language, the offender is “purged” from the community and the gate marks his or her permanent exclusion: “so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you” (Deut 22:24). Because these legal and other materials were being edited and redacted in the Persian period to create the Pentateuch, the memory of elders at the gate would signify decisions about who belonged within Yehud’s social orbit.¹⁹ The association of gates with elders, then, partially represented in miniature the larger community’s self-definition of who it was by whom it excluded.

In the case of a rebellious son who refuses to heed his parents, the elders act for the benefit of the community: “then his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives. . . . Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall purge the evil from your midst; and all Israel shall hear, and fear” (Deut 21:19–21).²⁰ The gate is where the rebellious son is officially excluded from the community through the mechanism of stoning. When David is informed that his own rebellious son, Absalom, is dead, he is at the gate (2 Sam 18:33).

Another instance of exclusion from the community occurs as the result of intercourse between a man and a woman engaged to a different man. Rape is ruled out as a possibility on the grounds that the woman’s shouts of protest would have been heard within the city. A woman under similar circumstances outside the city walls, however, is given the benefit of the doubt, since the elders assume her cries would go unheard. There is a fierce and ironic logic at work here, since the woman stands a better chance of remaining as a member of the community, *an insider*, if she claims rape *outside* the walls, rather than

18. Deut 22:15, which deals with a wife spurned by her new husband, is an instance of averted expulsion.

19. Alan F. Segal, “The Second Temple Period,” in *The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion, and Culture* (ed. Judith R. Baskin and Kenneth Seeskin; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 34–57 (p. 36).

20. Willis, *Elders of City*, 163–85. Davies has argued that this and other social laws have most likely been generated by viewing Israel in relationship to its deity. In this case, the rebellious son is Israel and YHWH its father god (*On Origins of Judaism*, 62).

inside them, for which she will be executed. The woman having illicit sex inside the city walls is seen as having failed her community by not crying out, while the man has failed it for violating his neighbor's wife. As a consequence, both are stoned to death (Deut 22:24). They are no longer part of Israel/Yehud's social identity. Both citizens stand in a threshold of uncertainty where the elders gathered at the gate will determine their fates. Their social status will change permanently as a result.

Certainly, the Deuteronomistic law regarding a husband who is displeased with his wife took on new life in Yehud, at least during the time of Ezra. This delicate matter was adjudicated at the city gate: "Suppose a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, comes to dislike her and accuses her of misconduct and slanders her by saying, 'I married this woman, but when I approached her I did not find evidence of her virginity'" (Deut 22:13–14).

The woman's parents were then expected to come to the gate with evidence of their daughter's virginity, a cloth spread out before all the elders. There is no way to know how often this law was exercised, but to a post-exilic community returning to Yehud, intermarriage with foreign women was condemned under Ezra. In that context, the law could be used (or created) as a legal ruse for husbands to be rid of their foreign wives by breaking one covenant, the marital one, for another, Israel's purity before God. The ritualized rejection of wives at the gate would inscribe their severe action as a dutiful and religious one taken for the sake of the social cohesion of the (remaining) insiders.

A gate is grandfathered into the story about the golden calf; the Levites marshal there to kill 3,000 of their own people (Exod 32:26–27). Moses orders them to "Put every man his sword on his side and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay every man his brother" (Exod 32:27). This ruthless scene at the gate purges and clarifies whom the "insiders" will be who will constitute Israel by whom it excludes. The boundary function of a gate, then, is being inscribed to preserve the social integrity of the community inside the gate, even though this incident takes place in the desert, before Israel built or took control over actual gates and fortified cities. It is clear in these cases that the gate symbolizes issues about containment or the integrity of Israel, as offenders are expelled from the community. Social purity is protected, and the cohesion of the remaining insiders is strengthened.

In the resolution of legal issues, it is clear that the community played a role in addition to the elders. The son is deemed rebellious *not* if it is only his parents who cannot control him, but if he proves unteachable by anyone. For a case of rape within the city walls, it is presumed that the community would have heard the cries of a woman in distress and acted on them. When a husband disputes a wife's virginity after their marriage, it is not only his word against hers; the woman's parents are also brought in to testify and produce a garment as evidence of her erstwhile virginity (Deut 22:17). Throughout the process of legal decision-making, the community has a say in construing who Israel is.

The evidence after a stoning, that is, a pile of stones with a corpse underneath, might be left for some time to serve as witness to the community's conviction in maintaining its laws. In Deuteronomy's language, the expulsion of criminal offenders by stoning "purges the evil from your midst." They are excluded through speech and action from the protection of those city walls, no longer welcomed "in" via the gate.

From the examples of legal and narrative material in biblical traditions, there certainly is a pronounced association of the gate with decisions about sexual issues such as rape, the right of the redeemer, the disgruntled husband, and intermarriages. But perhaps the oddest use of the city gate to signify social exclusion and mark Jewish identity occurs in the fake treaty between the sons of Jacob and the Shechemites after the rape of Dinah. There, Hamor meets with his elders at the gate to agree to a mass circumcision for the sake of peace with Jacob's sons. He is being duped—this is Jacob's specialty—and so the security function of the gate and of treaties is nil (Gen 34:20): "And all who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and his son Shechem; and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city" (Gen 34:24).

The outsiders to the city are Jacob's sons. The purported insider, represented by Shechem, has forced himself into membership in Israel via Dinah's rape. This is a violation, not only of Dinah but also of Israelite boundaries and identity. The sons of Jacob interpret Shechem's rape, that is, his "entering into" Dinah, as a cry for inclusion in Israelite society, saying in effect, "You want to be one of us? Then circumcise yourselves." The manner of revenge wryly inscribes the inclusion rite of Israel, namely, circumcision. All of the inhabitants of the city, the Shechemites, are surgically made into Israelites. Then, when they are sore and weakened after the operation, the sons of Jacob slaughter them all. Hamor, Shechem, and the men of the town had opened their gate as well as their foreskins to Israel in a twofold and rather sacrificial demonstration of their peaceful intentions. But since Shechem had forcefully entered Dinah, he and his town are not welcomed into Israel at all. Instead, they are excluded from Israel's social orbit through slaughter. The insiders of this gate are no more, as Israel replaces them.

The symbolic expulsion from the community via the gate in these legal and narrative materials helped to preserve an overall social stability and order in Yehud. This would serve the community as well as facilitate the broader imperial maintenance of social order in the province of the Persian Empire. Indeed, the final collection of these deuteronomic laws along with the other laws of the Pentateuch in the Persian period reinforces peaceful control over the region of Yehud. "Proper relationships are important, not only between God and humanity and among humans themselves but also especially between Yehud and Persia."²¹ During the reign of Darius I, the administration worked

21. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow*, 135.

to standardize laws and promulgate them throughout the empire. J. Berquist has argued that the promulgation of Persian law codes during his reign may have influenced the collection and codification of law materials into the larger creation of the Pentateuch.²²

Acceptance of the Foreigner

In addition to expulsion, the gate functioned symbolically in biblical traditions to mark the inclusion of a previous outsider into the community. Female characters who are somehow deemed to be at the margins of society are often situated near the city gate or wall, and from this pool of candidates emerge several new insiders of Israelite memory (Deut 22:15; Judg 9:53, of a tower; Ruth 4:11, 2 Kgs 6:26, 9:33; Song 8:9–10, Esth 2:19, Ezek 8:14, 2 Macc 6:10, Tob 11:16, Jdt 8:33). From that marginalized position, the woman undergoes a change in status, not solely through legal adjudication by elders but also through the narratives that bestow it. The characters Rahab, Ruth, and Esther are all, for one reason or another, on the outside of formal, social acceptance and are narratively positioned at the city gate.

Rahab

Rahab is the Canaanite prostitute who lives in the city wall of Jericho. As a prostitute, she would benefit from this location, with its near access to the potential customers arriving through the city gate. At the same time, however, those living in the wall would be more vulnerable in times of a security breach, while those of higher social status, such as the king and administrative officials, would enjoy the greater security buffer offered by living in the interior of the city. While her location is pragmatic, it nevertheless suspends Rahab in a state of continuous liminality; she inhabits the place of the “in-between.” Rahab, then, is an outlier to her own community of Jericho, living on the literal margins of the city: “for her house was built into the city wall, so that she dwelt in the wall” (Josh 2:15). What is ironic and useful is that her outlier status positions her to become an insider in Israel’s memory: it is Rahab who enables the spies to enter Jericho through her window on the wall and thereby gain a foothold in the Promised Land.

The instability of her own social standing as a Canaanite prostitute has rendered her receptive, perhaps even empathically so, to the outsiders, Israel. Her marginalized status has enabled her to see it in the outsider wandering spies. In Rahab’s own case, her status has shifted from Canaanite prostitute, on the margins at the gate, to being a “righteous Gentile” in Israel’s memory. She helps the outsiders, Israel, to become the insiders by taking possession of their Promised Land. And, she does so through another threshold: the window, with

22. Ibid., 138.

its red cord on display. Rahab is a heroine of Israel's memory because she has reversed the role of the insider, once enjoyed by Canaanites within the city gate of Jericho, to the wandering Israelites who will take over not only this city gate but by it, entry into the entire Promised Land. This was the largest threshold of them all, so Rahab is rightly remembered positively for her successful management in securing Israel through its most vulnerable transition.

The fortunes and status of the Canaanites obviously have changed in Israel's story as *they* now become the outsiders, without need of either walls or gates. This is deft, if heartless, storytelling of a prostitute's treason toward her own people, in the service of Israel. As a feature of Yehud's subsequent cultural memory, the gate once again marks the transition. That is where insiders establish who really belongs, namely, those loyal to the community's social identity. Remarkably, the social cohesion of that new insider group trumps Rahab's considerable status deficits—prostitute, enemy foreigner, and woman. Rahab's inclusion then reflects in part an acceptance of the enhanced social differentiation of the Persian Empire and greater ease and familiarity with a variety of foreigners to Yehud. If so, then the story of a foreign outsider being welcomed “in” helps legitimate a present Persian social context of many diverse ethnicities.²³ The lessons about acceptance in the Rahab story are predicated not on ethnicity or gender but on the value that a person or group brings to the larger social identity. These lessons would work to grease the wheels of social and commercial interactions between various groups within the province of Yehud and beyond. A similar lesson about the benefits of including a foreign woman, such as Rahab, occurs as well in the tale of Ruth.

Ruth

In the book of Ruth, the gate is the central locale for deciding the social status changes for three people: Ruth, Boaz, and the nameless man who is the immediate next of kin. The elders hold court at the gate in Bethlehem to witness Ruth's transition from outsider, a Moabite widow, to insider, an Israelite wife of Boaz (Ruth 4:1, 5, 11; Deut 25:7). The legal matter of the right of the redeemer involves the prior disavowal of the next-of-kin before Boaz can claim the right.²⁴ He then shifts in status to the next-of-kin and publically claims his interest. By doing so, Boaz shifts his status again to that of redeemer and eventually husband and he ensures the inclusion of the dead husband's memory as a descendent, that is, inside the gate of the community. “Also Ruth, the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his native place; you are witnesses this day” (Ruth 4:10).

23. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 3.

24. Willis, *Elders of City*, 283–304.

The gate is specifically mentioned as the site for Mahlon, the dead husband, not to be cut off. It functions as a legal memorial for proclaiming who remains a part of Israel in its memory. Since the Moabites had been one of the ethnic groups barred from entry into Israel (Deut 23:3, Judg 10:6), Ruth's inclusion in Israel is significant. She becomes an insider, even as her original status as a Moabitess had been the most stringently excluded by Deuteronomy, making her a *persona non grata* (Deut 23:3).²⁵ Both her Moabite ethnicity and her mixed marriage to the Bethlehemite Boaz are affirmed. Since the issue of mixed marriages was such a contentious one in the Postexilic Period, the story of Ruth offered an affirmative contrast to Ezra's wholesale condemnation of marriage with "the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands" (Ezra 9:1–2). Here, Ruth is not only in a mixed marriage, but she is in one viewed as essential to Israel's "future" in that she is the great-grandmother of King David. For citizens of Yehud, then, the memory of Ruth the Moabite ancestor fostered acceptance of the many foreign wives undoubtedly living among their number.

Queen Esther

The story of Esther seems to operate in a similar fashion by sanctioning the acceptance of foreigners as well as an ethnic diversity of peoples within the Persian Empire. It takes place in the Persian court, and Esther is a Jew who marries the Persian king. The issue of inclusion and exclusion for Esther hinges not on intermarriage or her personal foreign status, as it had for Ruth, but rather on whether Jews are genuinely a protected part of the Persian Empire. Jewish ethnicity and Persia's policy of acceptance of social differentiation are tested in the story.

Esther represents a different sort of entry in that her aim is admittance into the "foreign" court of the Persian King, Ahasuerus. This symbolic function explains the frequent use of the gate in the story of Esther, where Mordecai sits outside it, keeping an informal "watch" over Persian rule (Esth 2:19, 21; 3:2–3; 4:2, 6; 5:9, 13; 6:10, 12). There, Mordecai provides security by transmitting information vital to saving the king's life, and later, the Jewish people as a whole. In this troubling story, the enemy is *within* the city gate. Hence, the status of being an insider is viewed as somewhat or sometimes precarious. Uncertainty dogs even the insider in a world with so much difference. This instance of intermarriage, which came about through a beauty contest and not as a diplomatic marriage to cement relationships with a particular group, turns out to be positive and useful, as it enables Esther to save her people from the destructive intent of Haman. The book of Esther is a particularly important

25. Ibid., 262–80.

case for cultural memory because it expressly deals with inclusion and risk within the sphere of Persian power.

Upon hearing the tale of Esther, the citizens of Yehud would undoubtedly have been keenly interested in the successful negotiations of being a Jew in the Persian palace because it symbolized their own status. The people of Yehud would have “experienced both the state of imperial Persia and the state of colonial Yehud as Persia’s extension.”²⁶ Esther, like them, carries a dual allegiance. As Berquist emphasizes, “For individuals, membership in a state is in addition to membership in a smaller social circle; a state is therefore a community of communities.”²⁷ Esther is blood kin to Mordecai who sits *outside the gate*, along with their people the Jews, and she is kin by marriage to the Persian king *inside the gate*. She manages to achieve the status of an insider while also remaining loyal to her outsider people, the Jews. At the same time, this is a Persian city, “foreign” to Israel’s eyes, and Esther is the at-risk foreign woman, afraid to declare her Jewish status. She nevertheless gains entry via her beauty and saves the Jewish people from Haman’s plot to exterminate them.

Yehud itself lived in peace under Persian imperial power and enjoyed a relative autonomy. Hence, its citizens were not constrained to the same extent as Esther by being in the palace, married to a king unaware of her full identity, dining with Haman, a man who hates Jews. The telescoped perspective in Esther’s dual loyalties is heightened for the purposes of social definition and clarity. The narrative is expressly addressing the vital societal dilemma of when to go along to get along—namely, endure a rigorous beauty pageant—and more important, when not to—namely, Haman’s plot of genocide. The setting of the story in the palace, with Mordecai at the gate, symbolically represents Yehud’s situation of dual loyalties to its province and to the Persian Empire, as it works to resolve them. As citizens of Yehud, Jews enjoyed a regional independence and inclusion into their society, religion, and culture, but as citizens of the wider Persian Empire, their status was at times perhaps less secure. Mordecai remains at the gate with a watchful eye on the Persian palace and his wariness might well reflect Yehud’s own. The citizens of Yehud via Esther and Mordecai do not, therefore, want to gain entry into the gate that is the Persian Empire, for they are already included. What they desire, however, are the intangible guarantees that a gate affords in the way of the protection and safety of imperial Persia from Yehud’s enemies.

They get these guarantees in the story’s resolution, as transitions in status occur once again at or through the gate. A change in status occurs for the three characters Esther, Mordecai, and Haman. Esther manages the risk and uncertainty involved in publicly owning her Jewish identity, and Mordecai is invited into the city. Throughout the story, Mordecai has acted, in effect, as an elder

26. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia’s Shadow*, 132.

27. *Ibid.*, 132.

writ large for the Persian Empire, since his adjudication maintains the societal harmony of the empire. The Persian insiders now include brave Jews who stand up against those who would foment war against them. The goodness of Persia, the insiders of this gate, is wide enough to welcome Jews along with a diversity of populations throughout its Empire. In the end, Haman is hanged, outside the gate. He is no Persian by the end, only an expelled outsider. The story is a celebration of belonging, courage, and the resolution of the frightening risks of not belonging.

Conclusion

In the social memory of Israel as we have seen, the gate represented much more than physical security. It was a threshold point for negotiating and revisiting the communal definitions of who belonged. By serving these legal and risk management functions, the gate ushered in as well a stability of social identity, where liminality was successfully negotiated, one way or the other, and transitions in social status were effected. It is clear from these examples that the city gate was the symbolic site of exclusion and inclusion. Social cohesion of the insiders was purchased and then strengthened only at the cost of being willing to exclude, willing to affirm what and who was clearly beyond the boundaries.

In cultural memory, these biblical stories about exclusions and inclusions would have resonances long after any actual city gate fortifications had been in place. Both the legal material and the narratives inscribe lessons that have more to do with sexual and cultural inclusion than with physical gate structures. In terms of social memory, Israel is having some fun at the expense of its enemies—Hamor and Shechem—as it affirms Jewish identity. Again, in postexilic Yehud and elsewhere, the question and nature of Jewish identity was contested, with circumcision being a vital marker. The foreskin itself is, after all, a gateway of sorts into Israel's future community, since it is the vehicle for progeny.²⁸

In all of these biblical occasions of city gates, the security and integrity of the Jewish people is highlighted, as is the importance of determining who will have insider status in this community and who will be excluded from it. In Achaemenid Yehud, it is easy to see how the story of Esther and the Shechem incident would inculcate the values of belonging, the social cohesion of the people, and pride in Jewish identity, voiced through proclaiming that status, as Esther had, and through the rite of circumcision. It is also evident that the legal decisions made by elders at the gate about acceptable conduct for insiders in the past and in the Yehud community of the present and future would have

28. Mary Douglas has suggested that the body often functions as a symbol in determining the social boundaries of a group (*Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* [New York: Pantheon, 1970] 65–81).

reinforced a status quo of peace within Persian imperial control. So, too, would the stories of the acceptance of foreign women (contra Ezra), such as Rahab and Ruth, as fully praiseworthy insiders. These values persisted and were reinscribed in Israel's cultural memory after the exile.

Inside-Outside: Domestic Living Space in Biblical Memory

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Introduction

In the Hebrew Bible, domestic living space is often defined by what it is not. The ‘house’ (בית) is the antithesis of the ‘street’ (רחוב) or ‘outside’ (חוץ). The domestic dwelling is a social space for hospitality and protection, but it is also shielded from view, hidden, and therefore a potentially dangerous and treacherous space to enter. This essay explores the concept of domestic space in biblical memory, with special focus on domestic space as liminal space in a field of tension between the binaries inside-outside and safety-danger. I shall focus on two memories in particular that are evoked by the concept of domestic living space: (1) domestic space as sheltered space and (2) domestic space as ambiguous space.

First, however, a few introductory remarks about architectural space and cultural memory are in order. By domestic living space, I mean the space inhabited by the individual and the family. It is “private” space as opposed to “public” and “official” space, and as a rule, it is only partly accessible or inaccessible to outsiders. According to the anthropologist S. Kent, “architecture creates boundaries out of otherwise unbounded space while the use of space can be seen as a means to organize that unbounded space.”¹ Along these lines, domestic space is interpreted in the present study as space delineated by the boundary partition between inside and outside, private and public, and “ours” and “theirs.”²

Cultural memory or collective or social memory, as it also is called, has made a triumphant entry into biblical scholarship in recent years.³ There is a

1. Susan Kent, “Activity Areas and Architecture: An Interdisciplinary View of the Relationship between Use of Space and Domestic Built Environments,” in *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-cultural Study* (ed. Susan Kent; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 1–8 (quoting p. 2).

2. Kent, “Activity Areas and Architecture”; James Krasner, *Home Bodies: Tactile Experience in Domestic Space* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2010).

3. See, for instance, Philip R. Davies, *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History, Ancient and Modern* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox,

growing conviction that cultural memory is a useful conceptual tool for classifying the Hebrew Bible. It has become increasingly clear that the biblical texts are not accurate reports and recollections of past events, not history as such, but rather, texts aimed at creating identity and social memory by alternating strategies of recalling, forgetting and inventing.⁴ Our main source of access to the cultural memory of Yehud in the Persian and early Hellenistic periods is the biblical texts. The Hebrew Bible represents an aspect of the shared cultural memory, of a construed past and imagined future of the community in which it was produced and reread. One could argue that the Hebrew Bible offers insight only about a very limited group of people, the cultural elite and producers of texts, or as E. Ben Zvi calls them, “the literati.”⁵ I agree with Ben Zvi that, although the production and use of these texts was restricted to a fairly small group of people, it is reasonable to assume that the cultural memories represented in the Hebrew Bible to some extent correspond with the shared cultural memory of a larger group: “given that social isolation was not an option for these literati, one may assume their social memory trickled up and down within the community at large.”⁶

Although cultural memory can manifest itself in a plethora of ways, such as rituals, works of art, and monuments, texts are the mnemonic media par excellence: “literature is culture’s memory.”⁷ When studying cultural memory represented in texts, the conclusions we reach are primarily literary-critical; we are able to study how memories in a textual form were constructed, adapted and circulated.⁸ In the following, I shall offer a survey of the memories constructed in relation to domestic space in the Hebrew Bible.

2008); Pernille Carstens and Niels Peter Lemche, introduction to *The Reception and Remembrance of Abraham* (ed. Pernille Carstens and Niels Peter Lemche; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011; Pernille Carstens, Trine Hasselbach, and Niels Peter Lemche, eds., *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis* (PHSC 17; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2012). For a discussion of terminology, see Astrid Erll, “Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 1–15.

4. See Davies, *Memoirs of Ancient Israel*, 105–23; Carstens and Lemche, introduction, xiv.

5. E.g., Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Memory of Abraham in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period Yehud,” in *The Reception and Remembrance of Abraham* (ed. Pernille Carstens and Niels Peter Lemche; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011) 13–75 (pp. 13–16).

6. *Ibid.*, 15.

7. Renate Lachmann, “Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 301–10 (p. 301).

8. Max Saunders, “Life-Writing, Cultural Memory, and Literary Studies,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 321–31 (p. 323).

Domestic Space in the Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew Bible, domestic space is primarily described by reference to the architectural space of the 'house' (בית) or the 'tent' (אהל). Houses are built of stone and mudbrick (Ezek 13:10–18), sometimes with pillars (Prov 9:1). They have 'windows' (חלון, 1 Sam 19:12) and 'doors' (דלת, Gen 19:10; Judg 19:22; 2 Kgs 4:4), and sometimes, 'locks or bolts' (מנעול, Song 5:5). Judg 5:28 describes Sisera's mother looking through a 'latticed window' (אשנב; cf. Prov 7:6 and Song 2:9, חרך) and according to Josh 2:15, the house of Rahab the prostitute was 'adjacent to or even shared the wall of the city' (ביתה בקיר) (החומה). Domestic space includes the 'flat roof' (גג) of the house, where various activities are performed (Josh 2:6; 1 Sam 9:26; 2 Sam 11:2). Deut 22:8 is an admonition to build a 'parapet' (מעקה) on one's roof, so that no one falls off and dies.⁹ There are hardly any descriptions of the interior of the house. Prov 7:16 is an exception; the strange woman tries to entice the young man by referring to her bed bedecked with 'coverings' (מרבדים), 'colored linens from Egypt' (חטבות אטון מצרים).

The tent is the dwelling space of choice in narratives set in the primeval history, the patriarchal narratives, and during Israel's wandering in the wilderness. So, for instance, Noah's drunkenness takes place 'inside his tent' (בתוך אהלה) in Gen 9:21, and Abraham sees his visitors from 'the tent door' (פתח-האהל) in Gen 18:1–2.¹⁰ In Genesis 16, when YHWH sends manna from heaven to feed his wandering people, each of the Israelites is required to gather enough to feed the persons he has 'in his tent' (לאשר באהלו). These references to a nomadic lifestyle correspond well with the memory of Israel's ancestry as a 'wandering Aramean' (ארמי אבר) who went to Egypt to become 'a great, mighty and populous nation' (לגוי גדול עצום ורב) that was led through the desert to 'a land flowing with milk and honey' (ארץ זבת חלב ודבש; Deut 26:5–9).¹¹

The type of tent imagined in the Hebrew Bible is most likely the so-called black tent, a square structure made of woven goat hair (Exod 26:7). Unlike the house, which is permanent and fixed, the tent is a more fragile and inconstant structure designed for mobility. The primary functions of the black tent are to shield its inhabitants from the sun, to offer protection from cold, wind, sand, and dust, and to provide privacy for its inhabitants. The black tent does not

9. John S. Holladay Jr., "House, Israelite," in *ABD* 3:308–18 (pp. 308–9); James W. Hardin, *Lahav II: Households and the Use of Domestic Space at Iron II Tell Halif. An Archaeology of Destruction* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010) 175–77.

10. Interestingly, the LXX reads οἶκος 'house' instead of σκηνή 'tent' in Gen 9:21.

11. See Ronald Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Ben Zvi, "Memory of Abraham," and Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974).

offer much protection from the cold, but the texture of the woven goat hair is ideal in a warm climate because it allows the breeze to pass through the tent.¹²

Unlike houses, the inside of a tent is not divided into rooms. The domestic space of a tent is divided according to the activities that take place there, such as cooking, storage, entertaining, and stabling. The tent, however, is rarely a self-contained spatial unit, and the activities that take place there often spill outside.¹³ This is also the case in the scene in Genesis 18, mentioned above, where Abraham welcomes his three visitors; he asks the men to sit down and rest outside the tent, ‘under the tree’ (תחת העץ) (v. 4). This is also where they eat their meal (v. 8). Sarah, who is in charge of baking bread for the guests, remains inside the tent (vv. 6 and 9–10).¹⁴ In this case, the domestic space of the tent used for eating and entertaining visitors transcends the architectural boundary of the tent itself. In the house, domestic space is less likely to transcend the walls of the dwelling, but it may encompass the ‘courtyard’ (חצר, 2 Sam 17:18) and the space in front of the house, by the door (Prov 9:14).

As is shown by the Hebrew Bible passages treated in detail below, one of the most important social activities that take place in domestic space is hospitality. There is no explicit rule of hospitality in the Hebrew Bible, but it seems that there is an obligation or at least an ideal to offer visitors rest, food, and protection (e.g., Gen 18:1–8, 19:1–3; Judg 19:4–8).¹⁵ Hospitality and the ensuing cohabitation and commensality create bonds between a host and his visitors and provide an opportunity to transform a stranger and possible threat into a friend and ally.¹⁶ It is always right to offer hospitality, but in accordance with the rules of gift-giving, accepting hospitality will cause the guest to be indebted to his host. Therefore, offers of hospitality are often veiled in expressions of supplication and servility so as not to shame the guest, and hospitality is customarily refused before it is accepted (e.g. Gen 19:1–3; Judg 19:4–8, 17–21).¹⁷

12. Torvald Faegre, *Tents: Architecture of the Nomads* (London: John Murray, 1979) 9–59; Roger Cribb, *Nomads in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 86–88.

13. *Ibid.*, 100–101.

14. For an interesting analysis of this meal, see Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* (BibleWorld; Sheffield: Equinox, 2013) 139–48.

15. Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 164; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962) 10.

16. Victor H. Matthews, “Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4,” *BTB* 21 (1991) 13–21 (pp. 13–14); Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 62.

17. Mario Liverani, “Messages, Women and Hospitality: Inter-tribal Communication in Judges 19–21,” in *Studies in Egyptology and the Ancient Near East: Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* (ed. Mario Liverani, Zainab Bahrani, and Marc van de Mieroop; London: Equinox, 2004) 160–92 (p. 169).

The core locus for hospitality is the space of the dwelling, that is, domestic space, but the sphere of hospitality transcends domestic space as the guest only gradually approaches the home of his host. In Genesis 19, Lot encounters his guests by the city gates (v. 1), and there he offers them hospitality. In Judges 19, the Levite and his companions sit down in the street of Gibeah, almost challenging the people of the city to take them in. This is where the old Ephraimite encounters the travelers and extends his offer of hospitality, after which he takes them to his house.¹⁸ Similarly, the protection entailed by an offer of hospitality should probably transcend the narrow confines of the dwelling.¹⁹

Domestic Space in the Archaeological Record

Precious little is known about the layout of domestic living space in the Persian and early Hellenistic periods from archaeological evidence. There are several reasons for this shortage of information; in many tells, the Persian-period stratum is the one closest to the surface so that this layer has been subject to erosion. Furthermore, at many sites, intense building activity in the Hellenistic period has caused severe damage to the Persian-period strata.²⁰ Finally, in many sites with uninterrupted settlement in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.E., the Babylonian and early Persian periods, there are no discernible destruction layers; therefore, strata tend to cover very long periods of time and it is difficult to say anything with certainty about the developments in material culture in the subphases of the period.²¹ It seems that in the cities, where it has been possible to isolate a Persian-period stratum, the preferred system of town planning was the so-called Hippodamic plan, named after Hippodamus of Miletus, who lived in the 5th century B.C.E. The system, however, appears to predate Hippodamus. The Hippodamic system divides residential areas into rectangular blocks separated by streets that cross each other at right angles.²² The best example of a city constructed according to the Hippodamic plan is Olynthus in Greece, which was built in 430 B.C.E. In Palestine, the prime example of this well-ordered gridiron layout is Dor, which was probably laid out in the late 6th century B.C.E., but there are also similar layouts in Shiqmona, Tel Megadim,

18. Ibid., 168–70.

19. See Shafer-Elliott, who writes: “Geographically speaking, the protection from the host extended to a certain radius around the dwelling, even after the guest had left” (*Food in Ancient Judah*, 147).

20. Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, vol. 2: *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732–332 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 2001) 461–62.

21. Jeffrey R. Zorn, “Tell en-Naşbeh and the Material Culture of the Sixth Century,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 413–47 (pp. 414–17).

22. Ephraim Stern, *Dor Ruler of the Seas: Nineteen Years of Excavations at the Israelite Phoenician Harbor Town on the Carmel Coast* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000) 157–64.

Acco, Nahariya, Tell Abu Hawan, Ashkelon and Ashdod.²³ Interestingly, the residential quarter of the Judeans at Elephantine in Egypt appears to have been laid out in a similar fashion.²⁴ With regard to domestic architecture, the preferred type in the Persian period appears to be the “open court house,” which is composed of an open court surrounded by rooms at several or all sides. This type was in use already in the Assyrian period and continued through the Persian period in a style E. Stern describes as “surprisingly uniform.”²⁵

It was only in the 1980s and 1990s that household archaeology, the archaeology of domestic space, gained a foothold in Syro-Palestinian archaeology.²⁶ So far, studies have focused on the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and following the pioneering work of L. Stager and P. M. M. Daviau, there are now a number of detailed analyses of domestic space in Iron Age Palestine.²⁷ A couple of recent examples are J. D. Schloen’s comprehensive study of the joint-family, Mediterranean-type, patrilocal household, the ‘house of the father’ (בֵּית אֲבִי), in Bronze Age Ugarit and Iron Age Palestine, the analysis by Y. Gadot and A. Yasur-Landau of a domestic building at Megiddo (Level K-4, Iron I), J. W. Hardin’s study of the F7 dwelling at Tell Halif (Iron II), the analysis by L. Singer-Avitz of domestic buildings at Tel Beersheba (Iron II), and A. J. Brody’s detailed study of an Iron Age II domestic compound at Tell en-Naṣbeh.²⁸ So

23. Stern, *Archaeology of Land of Bible*, 461–64; John W. Betlyon, “A People Transformed: Palestine in the Persian Period,” *NEA* 68 (2005) 4–58 (p. 36). At Dor, which unquestionably is the best example of domestic architecture in Persian-period Palestine, there are long rows of domestic buildings divided into smaller units or apartments, with doors opening onto the closest street. Only the ground floor is preserved, but originally, the houses may have been two-storeyed. The street dividing the residential buildings from the building blocks that contain shops and workshops may have been covered by a roof to provide pedestrians with an overhang (Stern, *Archaeology of Land of Bible*, 462–63).

24. Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 B.C.* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982) 49.

25. Stern, *Archaeology of Land of Bible*, 468; idem, *Material Culture*, 54–57.

26. James W. Hardin, “Understanding Houses, Households, and the Levantine Archaeological Record,” in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (ed. Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 9–25.

27. See *ibid.*, 12–13 with references; Lawrence E. Stager, “The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel,” *BASOR* 260 (1985) 1–35; P. M. Michèle Daviau, *Houses and Their Furnishings in Bronze Age Palestine: Domestic Activity Areas and Artefact Distribution in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); P. M. Michèle Daviau, “Family Religion: Evidence for the Paraphernalia of the Domestic Cult,” in *World of the Aramaeans: Studies in History and Archaeology in Honor of Paul-Eugene Dion* (ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl; 3 vols; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 2:199–229.

28. J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001); Yuval Gadot and Assaf Yasur-Landau, “Beyond Finds: Reconstructing Life in the Courtyard

far, there are no detailed studies of household archaeology in Persian-period Palestine or in Persian-period Yehud.²⁹ However, it seems reasonable to assume that some of the insights gained from an analysis of domestic space in an Iron II context also can be applied to the uses of domestic space in the Persian period, especially at sites where settlement is uninterrupted from the Iron II to the Persian period.³⁰ Therefore, Brody's analysis of domestic activity at Iron II Tell en-Naşbeh will be summarized.

Tell en-Naşbeh, which is usually identified with biblical Mizpah in Benjamin, is situated 12 km north of Jerusalem. The site was first settled in the Late Chalcolitic and Early Bronze I periods and was then uninhabited from the end of Early Bronze until the beginning of the Iron Age. In the Iron II period (stratum 3), Tell en-Naşbeh was a fortified town or village with a casemate wall. The Iron II dwellings were mostly pillared houses containing two or three parallel long rooms, with a broad room across the back. The back rooms of the outermost row of buildings formed part of the casemate wall. In the Babylonian and Persian periods (stratum 2), the inner gate and some of the earlier buildings went out of use and new and more spacious houses of the four-room

Building of Level K-4," in *Megiddo IV: The 1998–2002 Seasons* (ed. Israel Finkelstein, David Ussishkin, and Baruch Halpern; 2 vols.; Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2006) 2:583–600; Hardin, *Lahav II*; idem, "Understanding Domestic Space: An Example from Iron Age Tel Halif," *NEA* 67 (2004) 71–83; Lily Singer-Avitz, "Household Activities at Tel Beersheba," in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (ed. Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 275–301; Aaron J. Brody, "'Those Who Add House to House': Household Archaeology and the Use of Domestic Space in an Iron II Residential Compound at Tell en-Naşbeh," in *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager* (ed. J. David Schloen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009) 45–56; Aaron J. Brody, "The Archaeology of the Extended Family: A Household Compound from Iron II Tell en-Naşbeh," in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (ed. Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 237–54.

29. For a discussion of the extent of the province of Yehud, see Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (BibleWorld; London: Equinox, 2005) 209–80; Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 134–84. For an earlier discussion that excludes the Shephelah as a separate province, see Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 75–113.

30. There is an ongoing debate about the degree of continuity in material culture from the Iron II to the Persian period in Palestine. See Avraham Faust, "Judah in the Sixth Century B.C.E.: A Rural Perspective," *PEQ* 135 (2003) 37–53 with references; Hans Barstad, "After the 'Myth of the Empty Land': Major Challenges in the Study of Neo-Babylonian Judah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 3–20; Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 214–48.

type were built in their stead. There are indications that Tell en-Naşbeh was destroyed, but not burned, sometime in the latter half of the 5th century B.C.E. Thus, there seems to be a gap in occupation between the late Persian period and the early Hellenistic period, when the site was resettled (stratum 1).³¹

Brody has conducted a thorough analysis of the object distribution of one of the Iron II (stratum 3) domestic compounds at Tell en-Naşbeh. The compound consists of five building units that all share common walls; a two-room structure in the northwest, three standard three-room houses, and an atypical three-room house in the southeast.³² The walls of the compound are made of a single row of stones, ca. 31–47 cm wide, which may indicate that the compound did not have a second storey.³³ Brody's analysis shows that the compound, which consists of 16 rooms, 1 bin, and 2 cisterns, encompassed 2 kitchens (rooms 581 and 608), 3 living rooms (room 579, 610 and 612), a stable (room 580), a handful of storage rooms (rooms 575, 577, 578, 584, 606, 607, and 609), one of which may also have been used as a stable (room 607), a workshop (room 576), and a room with an *in situ* olive-pressing vat (room 588).³⁴ The living rooms, which are identified as the broad rooms in the back of the three three-room houses in the middle of the compound, were most likely used by a nuclear family for the consumption of shared meals, sleeping, and entertaining visitors.³⁵ The two kitchens, rooms 608 and 581, the latter of which may have been a courtyard, may have served as winter and summer kitchens, respectively. Room 584, which is one of the long rooms in the innermost three-room house, may have doubled as a seasonal kitchen and storeroom. Unfortunately, no clay oven, which would have helped identify a kitchen, was discovered in the compound.³⁶

The proportionally large number of storage rooms emphasizes the importance of this function for the survival of ancient families. The storage rooms are primarily located in the two outermost buildings of the compound, the two-room house and the atypical, three-room house. The highest number of tools was found in room 576, the room identified as a workshop, and a limited amount of weaving and sewing items were found in some of the workrooms and storerooms. The largest concentration of implements for making clothes was found in the room with the olive-pressing vat (room 588), which may indi-

31. Jeffrey R. Zorn, "Naşbeh, Tell en-," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (ed. Eric M. Meyers; 5 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 4:101–3; idem, "Tell en-Naşbeh and Material Culture"; Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 126–32.

32. Brody, "Those Who Add House to House," 46.

33. Ibid., 47; contra Schloen, *House of Father*, 176–80.

34. Brody, "Those Who Add House to House," 53–54. For a plan of the compound, see ibid., 47; or idem, "Archaeology of Extended Family," 241.

35. Brody, "Those Who Add House to House," 51.

36. Ibid., 51, 53.

cate that the room had multiple functions that varied seasonally.³⁷ Cultic items, figurines, and clay vessels were distributed one per room in six rooms. These rooms were storage rooms, workrooms, and living rooms, and there seems to be no discernible pattern in the distribution. In one room, however, room 513, there was a small cluster of cultic items that could point to this room as a domestic shrine.³⁸ Brody suggests that the Iron II domestic compound at Tell en-Naṣbeh was inhabited by an extended family made up of three nuclear families. Each nuclear family would have occupied its own living space in one of the three three-room houses, but would have had shared access to work rooms, including kitchens, and storage rooms.³⁹

Brody's analysis of the compound shows how domestic space in Iron II Tell en-Naṣbeh was used for cooking and food production, eating, sleeping, stabling, storage, craftwork and cultic activities. In the Persian period, the size of the individual houses grew and the four-room house succeeded the three-room house as the most common type of domestic dwelling, but it seems reasonable to assume that the core activities carried out in domestic space stayed the same in the Babylonian and Persian periods.

Domestic Space as Gendered Space

One of the side benefits of the recent interest in household archaeology, when paired with the recent upsurge in gender studies, is a focus on so-called gendered space. Domestic space can be viewed as the architectural boundary, the built environment, within which the members of the household carry out their activities.⁴⁰ Because some household activities tend to be performed by one gender rather than the other, these activities may point to areas of gendered space within the dwelling. This indicates not necessarily a gender-segregated environment but rather a pattern, where women and men used common space differently and at different times.⁴¹

Two domestic activity areas that are especially associated with the household tasks of women are food preparation, particularly those involving cereals, and textile production, such as weaving, spinning, and sewing.⁴² This

37. Ibid., 52.

38. Ibid., 53; idem, "Archaeology of Extended Family," 252.

39. Brody, "Those Who Add House to House," 54; idem, "Archaeology of Extended Family," 254. For a discussion of the size of the Iron Age household, see Schloen, *House of Father*, 147–50.

40. Hardin, "Understanding Houses," 15.

41. Carol Meyers, "Material Remains and Social Relations: Women's Culture in Agrarian Households of the Iron Age," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 425–44 (esp. pp. 428–30).

42. Meyers cites ethnographic, ethnohistorical, and iconographic evidence for this fact ("Material Remains and Social Relations," 430–34 with references).

corresponds with the impression we get from the Hebrew Bible, where women are portrayed as the main producers of food, particularly bread (Lev 26:26; 1 Sam 8:13, 28:24; 2 Sam 13:5–10; Eccl 12:3; Jer 7:18), whereas men are usually in charge of the butchering of meat (Gen 43:16; Exod 12:21; 1 Sam 9:23–24, 14:32–34, 25:11).⁴³ Women are also portrayed as weavers and spinners (Exod 35:25–26, 36:6; 2 Kgs 23:7; Judg 16:13–14) and the production of clothes and food preparation is undertaken by the perfect wife in Proverbs 31, who “works with her hands in delight” (v. 13).⁴⁴

In the domestic compound at Tell en-Naṣbeh, the kitchens (rooms 608, 581, and possibly 584) were probably used primarily by the women of the household. Interestingly, a bead, a bone pendant, and an earring were found in the “summer kitchen” (room 581) of the compound. Although not a large assemblage, it is the largest group of jewellery found in one room of the compound, and it may support the assumption that the kitchen was primarily a space occupied by women.⁴⁵ The room with the olive-pressing vat (room 588) would most likely have been used primarily by men in the harvest season, but the presence of a bronze needle and a spatula in the same room indicates that it could have been used for sewing clothes outside the olive season, a task most likely performed by women.⁴⁶ It is possible that the men were the primary users of the workshop (room 576), but because the everyday activities of men mostly took place outside the house, it can be difficult to identify male living space.⁴⁷

When considering gendered space in ancient households, it is important to bear in mind that, although typical female activities, such as cooking and weaving, took place in the home, we should be careful not to apply modern conceptions of the value of domestic tasks to ancient societies. After the industrial revolution, the value of women’s labor in the home dropped, but in premodern societies, women’s crucial roles as producers of food and clothes would have been valued in quite another way.⁴⁸ Therefore, although women and women’s activities are primarily tied to domestic space in ancient socie-

43. Meyers, “Material Remains and Social Relations,” 431; Schafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 140–41. A couple of interesting exceptions to this pattern is the woman of Endor in 1 Sam 28:24, who appears to be doing her own butchering, and Jacob and Gideon in Gen 25:29–34 and Judg 6:19–21, who are both doing their own cooking. For the two latter examples, see Schafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 148–65.

44. So Meyers, “Material Remains and Social Relations,” 433.

45. Brody, “Those Who Add House to House,” 52. Because jewelry was used both by men and women, it may not be a definitive way to determine gendered space; so Singer-Avitz, “Household Activities at Tel Beersheba,” 293.

46. Brody, “Those Who Add House to House,” 54.

47. See Singer-Avitz, who suggests that the absence of objects associated with women’s activities, such as cooking, may indicate domestic space inhabited solely by men (“Household Activities at Tel Beersheba,” 291–94).

48. Meyers, “Material Remains and Social Relations,” 434–37.

ties, this does not necessarily entail that women are perceived as inferior because of their association with domestic tasks.⁴⁹

According to C. Meyers, urban development and the emergence of a bureaucratic elite created urban women, and urban women were most likely the type of women familiar to the biblical literati. Women's roles and status changed as they stopped being a productive part of the household, and women's relative parity gradually disappeared as the urban scene enhanced boundaries between private and public and male and female domains.⁵⁰ Women in the Hebrew Bible are almost exclusively tied to the domestic, private sphere; therefore, they automatically are connected with the "inside," with domestic space.⁵¹ I shall turn now to the memories of domestic space in the Hebrew Bible, first to domestic space as sheltered space.

Domestic Space as Sheltered Space

In four narratives in the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 19, Exodus 12, Joshua 2, and Judges 19), the house functions as a place of refuge and safety. Judges 19 is the unsettling story of a Levite from the hill country of Ephraim whose 'concubine' (פִּילגֶשֶׁת) leaves him to go to stay in her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah.⁵² After four months the Levite wants his concubine back and he travels to Bethlehem to retrieve her. His father-in-law welcomes him, offers him food, drink, and hospitality for three days and then urges him to stay yet another day.⁵³ Finally, in the afternoon of the fifth day, the Levite departs with his concubine, his servant and his two donkeys, but they have tarried too long in Bethlehem and are forced to spend the night in a city instead of continuing on to the hill country of Ephraim. The Levite refuses to enter Jebus, because it is inhabited

49. See idem, "Women and the Domestic Economy of Early Israel," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (ed. Alice Bach; New York: Routledge, 1999) 33–43. For an interesting discussion of the relationship between women and domestic space in the Hebrew Bible, see Risa Levitt Kohn, "In and Out of Place: Physical Space and Social Location in the Bible," in *From Babel to Babylon: Essays on Biblical History and Literature in Honour of Brian Peckham* (ed. Joyce Rilett Wood, John E. Harvey, and Mark Leuchter; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006) 253–62.

50. Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 190–91.

51. See T. Raymond Hobbs, "Man, Woman and Hospitality: 2 Kings 4:8–36," *BTB* 23 (1993) 91–100 (pp. 93–94); contra Victor H. Matthews, "Female Voices: Upholding the Honor of the Household," *BTB* 24 (1994) 8–15 (p. 8).

52. For two excellent analyses of Judges 19, see Liverani, "Messages, Women and Hospitality"; and Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 65–92.

53. For a comment on the exaggerated and infelicitous hospitality of the Levite's father-in-law, see Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," 14; and Liverani, "Messages, Women and Hospitality," 174.

by foreigners, and they continue to Gibeah in Benjamin, which they enter at sundown. They sit down in the 'street' (רחוב) and no one in Gibeah approaches them to offer shelter. Finally, an old man, who is an Ephraimite and a stranger residing in Gibeah, invites the Levite and his companions to spend the night in his house. In the evening, when the old man and his guests are enjoying themselves inside, the house is surrounded by the men of the city. They pound on the door and demand that the old man send out the Levite so that they can have sex with him. The old man goes outside to speak to them and implores them not to commit such a wicked act, because the Levite has come into his house as his guest. Instead, he offers them his virgin daughter and the concubine to do with as they please, but the men outside will not listen. So the Levite seizes his concubine and pushes her 'outside' (החוצה). The men rape the concubine all night and when they let her go, she collapses in front of the old man's house, lying in front of the 'door' (פתח), with her hands on the threshold (סף). The Levite loads his concubine onto his donkey and takes her to his house, where he cuts her body into twelve pieces and sends them to all the Israelite territories to incite them to seek revenge against the Benjaminites.

In the story of the Levite and his concubine, the house of the old man in Gibeah plays an important role as a refuge. The old man encourages the Levite to accept his hospitality and 'not to spend the night in the street' (רק ברחוב אל-תלך). The earnestness of the appeal indicates that the street is no proper place to spend the night and, indeed, that it may not be safe. The house, on the other hand, is a place where all the Levite's 'needs' (מחסור) are taken care of and where he enjoys food, drink, and merriment. When the house comes under attack and is surrounded by the men of the city, the 'door' (פתח) on which the men 'pound' (מתרסקים) becomes the barrier between the safety inside and the danger outside.⁵⁴ This boundary is emphasized in vv. 26–27, when the concubine falls down in front of the door of the house with her hands on the threshold as if she is trying desperately to crawl back to shelter. The Levite, on the other hand, who has spent his night in safety, emerges in the morning when the danger outside has passed and opens 'the doors of the house' (דלתות הבית).⁵⁵ The irony is that, although domestic space offers hospitality and shelter for the men in the story, the women are not covered by its protection.⁵⁶

In Gen 19:1–11, there is a parallel account of two angelic 'messengers' (מלאכים) who arrive at the city of Sodom in the evening.⁵⁷ Lot sees them and

54. Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 73.

55. Ibid., 78.

56. Liverani, "Messages, Women and Hospitality," 173; Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 75; but contra Victor H. Matthews, who considers women in the Hebrew Bible to be "legal extensions" of their husbands ("Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," *BTB* 22 [1992] 3–11 [pp. 9–10]).

57. There is no consensus regarding the interdependence of Genesis 19 and Judges 19; for various interpretations, see Stuart Lasine, "Guest and Host in Judges 19:

urges them to ‘turn aside’ (סור) and spend the night in his house. At first the messengers turn down Lot’s offer of hospitality and insist on spending the night in the ‘street’ (ברחוב), but Lot presses them and they accept his invitation. Once inside the house, Lot prepares a feast for his guests and they eat. But the men of the city surround the house and demand that Lot send out his two guests so that they may have sex with them. Lot then goes out the ‘doorway’ (הפתחה) and ‘closes the door behind him’ (והדלת סגר אחריו). He tries to dissuade them by offering his two virgin daughters instead of his guests, but the men threaten him and press against him and almost break the ‘door’ (הדלת). At this point, the two messengers intervene; they pull Lot inside the house and ‘shut the door’ (את-הדלת סגרו). They strike the men standing outside the ‘door of the house’ (הבית פתח) with blindness, so that they exhaust themselves looking for the ‘door’ (הפתח). In this way, Lot, his guests, and his daughters are saved from the dangers in the street.

Similar to the parallel narrative in Judges 19, Genesis 19 stresses the house as shelter, although in a slightly different way. The frequent references to the ‘door’ of the house (פתח and דלת), the boundary between safety inside and the dangerous street outside, underlines the difference between the two kinds of space it delineates. In contrast to Judg 19:25, where it seems that the Levite remains inside the house while pushing his concubine outside, Lot steps out of the door in Gen 19:6, leaving the protective sphere of his house.⁵⁸ The danger outside is vividly expressed in the description in v. 9 of Lot, who stands trapped between the shoving mob and the door, the boundary, which is frightfully close to caving in. When the angels pull Lot inside the house and shut the door, the dividing line between inside-outside and safety-danger is restored.

While the similarities between Genesis 19 and Judges 19 are manifest, a perhaps less obvious parallel to Genesis 19 can be found in Josh 2:1–24 and 6:22–25 in the story about Rahab and the Israelite spies. The two spies are sent on a mission to scout out the land of Jericho. They enter the house of Rahab, ‘the harlot’ (הבית פתח), and they ‘sleep’ (שכב) there. The choice of “sleep” or “lie down” in Josh 2:1, compared with the completely neutral ‘spend the night’ (לין) in Gen 19:2 and Judg 19:6, 9–11, 13, may indicate that the two Israelites entered Rahab’s house as customers rather than guests.⁵⁹ The king of Jericho hears that the two men have entered the house of Rahab in the city and

Lot’s Hospitality in an Inverted World,” *JSOT* 29 (1984) 37–59 (p. 38); and Matthews, “Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19,” 3, both with references.

58. Strictly speaking, the old Ephraimite, not the Levite, parallels Lot in Judges 19, and he goes outside (אצי) to speak with the men of the city, but there is no repeated reference to doors and doorways as there is in Gen 19:6–11.

59. Daniel Hawk, “Strange Houseguests: Rahab, Lot, and the Dynamics of Deliverance,” in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992) 89–97 (pp. 90–91); Phyllis Bird, “The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three Old

he sends a message to her, telling her to hand over the two spies. But Rahab hides the two men on the roof and tells the king that, indeed, they did come to her house but she sent them off. The men of Jericho go on a futile search for the spies, and Rahab goes to the roof of her house to talk to the two Israelites. She proclaims that she knows how mighty YHWH is and that she will help the spies in exchange for the lives of herself and her family. The two men swear to keep her and her family safe when they take the city, and then she lowers them down through her window to the other side of the wall. The spies give Rahab a red cord and bid her to tie it to the window. Then she must gather her entire family inside the house and they will remain safe. The spies manage to avoid their pursuers and return safely to the Israelite camp, where they tell Joshua that the land is ripe for conquest. In Josh 6:22–25, after the fall of Jericho, the story of Rahab reaches its conclusion as Joshua commands the two spies to enter Rahab's house and bring her out, together with her family and everything she owns, before the city of Jericho is burnt to the ground. After that day, the story ends; Rahab resides in the midst of Israel.

In both stories, the setting is a doomed city and the story begins when two men enter the city (Gen 19:1–3; Josh 2:1). Later in the evening, the men of the city show up in front of the house and they demand that the guests inside be brought out, but in both stories the crisis is averted (Gen 19:4–11; Josh 2:2–7). Then arrangements are made for the host and his or her family (Gen 19:13–14; Josh 2:15–23), and this is followed by an escape from the city (Gen 19:15–22; Josh 2:15–23). The narratives end with the destruction of the city and the deliverance of the host and family at the hands of the two men (Gen 19:22–29; Josh 6:15–25).⁶⁰

In Joshua 2, the house of Rahab functions as a safe haven, first for the two Israelite spies and then for Rahab and her family. Rahab hides the spies on the 'roof' (גג) and covers them with flax stalks. When the king of Jericho sends word to have the men handed over, his message creates a clear boundary between inside and outside: "'Bring out' (הוציאי) the men who have come to you, 'who came into your house' (אשר-באו לביתך)." The king commands Rahab to send the men, who are safely hidden inside, out into the street so that they may be apprehended. Instead, she sends the men of the city on a wild goose chase beyond the city walls.

In the next sequence, when the house becomes a shelter for Rahab and her family, the words of the spies in v. 19 make it very clear that only those who remain inside the house can expect safety: "Anyone who goes out of the 'doors' (דלת) of your house and into the 'street' (חורץ), his blood shall be on his own head, and we go free, but anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall

Testament Texts," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (ed. Alice Bach; New York: Routledge, 1999) 99–117 (p. 106).

60. Hawk, "Strange Houseguests," 89–90.

be on our head, if any hand is laid on him.” Again, like in Judges 19 and Genesis 19, the door of the house is emphasized as the dividing line between safety and danger and life and death.

The ‘red cord’ (תִּקְוַת חֹרֵט) that Rahab ties to the very window from which she lets down the spies resembles the blood on the doorposts in Exod 12:7–13.⁶¹ In the prescriptions for the Pesach meal in Exodus, it is specified how the blood of the lamb must be put on the ‘two doorposts’ (מְזוּזוֹת) and on the ‘lintel’ (מִשְׁקֶרֶת) of the houses, where the Israelites eat their meal. Like the red cord, the blood serves an apotropaic function to mark the house and ward off the evil and carnage that takes place outside. The sign on the house designates it as a place of shelter.

In a single passage in the Hebrew Bible, Lam 1:20, there is an interesting inversion of the memory of the house as sheltered space, where domestic space is described as unsafe and dangerous. In Lamentations 1, the fallen city of Jerusalem is described as a mourning woman, as a widow, and as a defiled maiden, the daughter of Zion.⁶² In vv. 11b–22 Jerusalem herself begins to speak, calling to YHWH and to the passers-by to see her misery and to be moved by it. Jerusalem’s requests for mercy are interlaced with descriptions of the hopelessness in the city; the young men and women have been brought into captivity (v. 18), the priests and elders have expired, searching for food (v. 19), and ‘in the street’ (מִחוּץ) the sword ‘makes childless’ (שָׁכַל), in the ‘house’ (בְּבֵית), it is ‘like death’ (כְּמוֹת; v. 20).

The memory of Jerusalem after the Babylonian conquest breaks down the boundary between safety and danger. The dividing line between ‘house’ (בֵּית) and ‘street’ (חוּץ) remains, but it is of no importance, because both inside and outside leads to death. Lamentations 1 describes a situation in which everyday life is turned upside down and shelter and protection are nowhere to be found.

Domestic Space as Ambiguous Space

In two passages in the Hebrew Bible, domestic space is characterized as ambiguous space that may lead either to safety or danger (Judg 4:17–24; and Proverbs 9).⁶³

61. Peter J. Leithart, “Passover and the Structure of Joshua 2,” *Biblical Horizons* 99 (1997). On-Line: <http://www.biblicalthorizons.com/biblical-horizons/no-99-passover-and-the-structure-of-joshua-2/>; Bernard P. Robinson, “Rahab of Canaan and Israel,” *SJOT* 23 (2009) 257–73 (p. 263).

62. Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) 167–74; Kathleen M. O’Connor, “Lamentations,” in *Women’s Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012) 278–82.

63. One could add another two passages to this group: Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 43 and the man of god from Judah and the prophet from Bethel in 1 Kings 13.

The first passage, Judg 4:17–24, tells the story of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, and Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army. After his army's defeat by Barak and the Israelite host, Sisera flees from the battlefield and seeks shelter in the tent of Heber's wife, because his lord, King Jabin of Hazor, is at peace with Heber.⁶⁴ Sisera approaches the 'tent' (אהל) of Jael and she 'goes out' (יצא) to meet him and encourages him to 'turn aside' (סור) into her tent. When he follows her invitation, she covers him with a blanket.⁶⁵ Sisera asks Jael for a drink of 'water' (מים), but she gives him 'milk' (חלב) and covers him a second time with the blanket. Then he asks her to stand guard in front of 'the doorway of the tent' (פתח האהל) and to say that there is no one inside in case anyone should enquire after him. When Sisera is fast asleep, Jael takes a tent peg and a hammer and kills him by nailing his head to the ground. When Barak turns up in pursuit of Sisera, Jael takes him inside her tent to see the army commander lying dead on the floor, with the tent peg in his temple.

In the story of Jael and Sisera, domestic space is seemingly safe and secure, but it turns out to be even more lethal than the enemy forces roaming outside. Jael's maternal care for Sisera in giving him milk, covering him with a blanket, and watching over him as he sleeps emphasizes the atmosphere of security and shelter. Sisera's violent death inside the tent at the hands of a woman, as foretold by Deborah in Judg 4:9, forms a stark and surprising contrast to this seemingly safe environment.⁶⁶ Ironically, the doorway, the boundary between inside and outside and safety and danger, is guarded by the very woman who lures Sisera to his death under the false pretenses of protection and shelter and who transforms the safe haven inside to a place of death.

In Proverbs 9, the contrast between the way of wisdom and folly is illustrated by the metaphor of Lady 'Wisdom' (חכמות) and the 'Woman of Folly' (אשת כסילות), who invite guests to their respective houses. Wisdom has built

In Genesis 43, the brothers are afraid to enter Joseph's house, but the meeting turns out to be successful, and in 1 Kings 13, the consequences of accepting the prophet's hospitality turn out to be fatal for the man of God. For an interesting analysis of Genesis 43, see David P. Wright, "Deciphering a Definition: The Syntagmatic Structural Analysis of Ritual in the Hebrew Bible," *JHS* 8/12 (2008). On-line: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_89.pdf. For 1 Kings 13, see Roland Boer, "National Allegory in the Hebrew Bible," *JSOT* 74 (1997) 95–116.

64. Matthews remarks that Sisera's arrival at the tent of Jael instead of at the tent of Heber is itself a breach of the code of hospitality. Sisera insults Jael by approaching her directly, and Jael again breaches the code of hospitality by offering hospitality herself instead of deferring to her husband. In his opinion, the author of Judges 4 deliberately emphasizes these breaches of the code of hospitality to justify the murder of Sisera ("Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," 15–16).

65. Nicole Duran points out that the choice of "turn aside to me" may indicate a sexual connotation ("Having Men for Dinner: Deadly Banquets and Biblical Women," *BTB* 35 [2005] 117–24 [p. 118]).

66. *Ibid.*, 118–19.

her house with seven pillars. She has slaughtered beasts for food, mixed wine, set her table, and sent her girls out into the city to proclaim an invitation to 'turn aside' (סור) into her house. Folly, on the other hand, sits in front of her house, 'in the doorway' (לפתח ביתה), and shouts to the passers-by, also inviting them to 'turn aside' (סור). Folly offers 'stolen water' (מים-גנורבים) and 'clandestine bread' (לחם סתרים) in contrast to Wisdom's bread and wine (v. 5). In spite of Folly's assurance that her water and bread are 'sweet' (מתק) and 'pleasant' (נעים), the narrator's voice warns the reader in v. 18; the passer-by does not know that "the dead are there, 'her guests' (קראיה) are in the depths of She'ol." This last remark echoes the descriptions of the 'strange woman' (אשה זרה) in Proverbs 2, 5, and 7, whose house sinks down to death and whose paths leads to the dead (2:18), whose steps lead to She'ol (5:5) and whose house is the road to She'ol.⁶⁷

The ambiguity of domestic space is emphasized in Proverbs 9 and the related passages in chaps. 2, 5, and 7 by reference to the dangers of accepting someone's hospitality. As soon as the guest crosses the threshold, liminal space in its most literal sense, the outcome is uncertain.⁶⁸ The guest places himself at the mercy of his host and a beautiful woman and a tempting meal may turn out to be a path to destruction rather than pleasure.

The dangers of hospitality usually are stressed in relation to the host. Hospitality is the opportunity to transform a potentially hostile stranger into a guest; as a result, the practice involves danger if the transformation fails.⁶⁹ But hospitality entails potential danger for the guest as well as the host. As V. H. Matthews points out, "The acceptance of hospitality, after all, is a willingness to submit to 'total subordination' to the host."⁷⁰

Domestic space can be ambiguous even if it is entered because of a friendly invitation to turn aside if the host, like Jael and Folly/the strange woman, is not to be trusted.

Conclusion

Domestic space in the Hebrew Bible plays a central role in matters of hospitality and in delineating boundaries between inside and outside, ours and theirs,

67. Carol A. Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1–9," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (ed. Alice Bach; New York: Routledge, 1999) 85–98.

68. Raymond C. van Leeuwen, "Liminality and Worldview in Proverbs 1–9," *Semeia* 50 (1990) 111–44; Judith E. McKinlay, "To Eat or Not To Eat: Where Is Wisdom in This Choice?" *Semeia* 86 (1999) 73–84 (see p. 79).

69. Lynn M. Bechtel, "A Feminist Reading of Genesis 19:1–11," in *Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series)* (ed. Athalya Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 108–28 (p. 116); Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," 13–14.

70. Idem, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 4.

and safety and danger. Statistically, the narratives that identify domestic space as sheltered and as relatively safe space dominate the picture. Therefore, one may conclude that in the cultural memory of Persian-period Yehud, domestic living space was primarily associated with protection and shelter (Genesis 19, Exodus 12, Joshua 2, Judges 19), although the safety of the house or tent could be ambiguous and potentially dangerous (Judg 4:17–24; Proverbs 9) or even shattered completely, as in the description of devastated Jerusalem (Lam 1:20).

Interestingly and not surprisingly, women frequently play an important role in these descriptions of domestic space. In the passages reviewed above, we encounter Lot's daughters, Rahab, the Levite's concubine and the old Ephraimite's daughter, Jael, Lady Wisdom, Woman of Folly / strange woman, and the personified Jerusalem. As was discussed above, women and women's activities are tied to the home and to domestic space in the Hebrew Bible, but there seems to be a conflict in these texts with regard to the role of women and hospitality. Women belong to the domestic sphere as does hospitality, but according to the Hebrew Bible, the two may not mix well.⁷¹ In Judges 4 and Proverbs 9, where domestic space is portrayed as ambiguous and unsafe, it is worth noting that women offer the hospitality.⁷² In the stories that portray domestic space as safe, on the other hand, men offer the hospitality (Genesis 19, Exodus 12, Judges 19). In Joshua 2, Rahab is an exception to this rule, but she is not an average woman in the Hebrew Bible. She is a prostitute and master of her own house, a liminal character who may be a member of the female sex but who acts and thinks like a man.⁷³ Therefore, Rahab may be the one exception to the rule in the Hebrew Bible that hospitality, an invitation to enter domestic space, should only be accepted if offered by a man. As my concluding remark, I cannot help but quote E. Levinas, who wrote that the feminine, not as in the feminine sex but as a side of all humans, is closely related to the home and to domestic space: the dimension of femininity is "the welcome of the dwelling."⁷⁴

71. See Matthews, who writes that women are not entitled to offer hospitality in the Hebrew Bible ("Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," 15–16), contra Hobbs, who claims that hospitality is part of the duties of both women and men, because it takes place in the domain of women's power ("Man, Woman and Hospitality," 94).

72. The narrative in 1 Kings 13 may be an exception to this rule. See p. 75 n. 63 above.

73. Bird, "Harlot as Heroine," 105–9.

74. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991) 158.

Threshing Floors and Cities

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Threshing floors belong in the country. A threshing floor in a city is anomalous, a disturbing intrusion of the rural, with all its bucolic rusticity, into the urban sophisticate, with its complex of splendid buildings, administration, civic pride and ideology, and literature. V. H. Matthews suggests that it has become a synonym for רחוב 'public square', and has lost all practical function, at least in 1 Kgs 22:10, because it is difficult to imagine the dust from the threshing floor blowing round the city gate, to which it is contiguous, without making everyone sneeze.¹ Perhaps it is a sign of the interdependence of city and country that the citizens have their fields outside the city walls and bring their crops there to be threshed and sorted. It may be a site of communal celebration at the end of the harvest, a reminder of agricultural roots, as well as a relaxation of social mores in an experience of *communitas*.

In any case, here we are concerned with literary threshing floors. A literary threshing floor, a threshing floor of the mind and the imagination, acquires significance from its position in the discourse as part of a panoply of references on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic planes, as well as sensations and connotations from everyday life. It already has metaphorical potential, by which I mean the capacity for any word or image to insert itself into a different frame of reference, to combine with other words or images to form a semiotic chain or cluster, communicating (to the reader, the writer) both an immediate set of associated commonplaces, resemblances, and differences, and an implicit,

1. Victor H. Matthews, "Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors: Legally Significant Sites in the Ancient Near East," *Fides et Historia* 19 (1987) 25–40 (p. 30). He proposes an evolution from villages, in which threshing floors were the only available open space and appropriate for settling disputes that would mostly concern grain, to urban centers, in which threshing floors acquired a symbolic and metaphorical sense and need not have been used for threshing at all. In a further study, he examines how threshing floors acquire symbolic significance, especially in the narrative in 1 Kings 22 ("Physical Space, Imagined Space, and 'Lived Space' in Ancient Israel," *BTB* 33 [2003] 12–20 [pp. 13–14]). Moshe Anbar documents the many attempts to emend the text of 1 Kgs 22:10 or to provide גרן with a more general meaning, before providing evidence from Mari that threshing floors were situated at town gates ("L'Aire à l'Entrée de la Porte de Samarie [1 R.XXII.10]," *VT* 50 [1990] 121–23 [pp. 121–22]).

unconscious, or half-conscious reservoir of significance that may be evoked at any time. Metaphor conjoins the determinate and the indeterminate, the spoken and the unspoken, taking us back to a past of language, when words had not attached themselves ineluctably to things.² A metaphor differs from a symbol in that, whereas a metaphor refers to a coupling of two or more things as part of a network of correlations and distinctions, a symbol is an aggregate of associated and usually fixed meanings attached to an object, for example, Father Time as the Grim Reaper is a symbol that makes use of metaphors. In the case of threshing floors, the set of symbolic significations derived from culture, history and social usage will provide the background from which metaphors will be drawn, and to which they contribute.³

Threshing floors are places for threshing, winnowing, and storing grain, and hence metonymic with the prosperity of the land and the divine promise. Both Jerusalem and Samaria are dependent on threshing floors, on agricultural resources. Correspondingly, the threshing floor can be a sign of judgment, if the crops fail. Prophetically, the separation of the wheat from the chaff is a conventional metaphor for the opposite fates of the righteous and the wicked, as well as for the future destruction of Israel. Threshing floors may also be scenes of harvest rituals and, hence, indigenous sacrality. In Hos 9:1–2, for instance, prostitution on threshing floors is associated with the worship of other gods and the polemic against Ba'al, the deity responsible for the land's fertility. Threshing floors suggest hybridity, the miscegenation of Canaanite and Israelite, the antithesis, in other words, of Yahwistic purity.

Threshing floors may also be used out of season for rituals such as mourning (Gen 50:10) or for public performance, as in 1 Kings 22. As a cleared, demarcated space, a threshing floor is a focal point for a community. Into that space may be projected communal anxieties, tensions, and disputations; in the *Tale of Aqhat* vv. 15–18, it is the scene of judgment. As a shared social space, enclosed from the rest of the world, it has a liminal quality; in entering it, one leaves one's everyday condition and, in a state of suspension of habitual practices and thoughts, experiences a *mise-en-abîme*, a reflection and heightened awareness of the real world and its values. Hence, threshing floors may be associated with oracles in 1 Sam 23:1–2, 2 Samuel 24, and 1 Kings 22.

2. Willard V. Quine stresses the importance of metaphor in early language acquisition as a child learns to apply similar sounds to analogous situations, its connection to play, as well as the "growing edges of science and philosophy" ("A Postscript on Metaphor," *CritInq* 5 [1978] 161–62). See also my "Metaphor, Play, and Nonsense," *Semeia* 61 (1993) 219–37.

3. It should be clear that this approach to metaphor differs radically from the cognitive approach that has become dominant in biblical studies; it is nonreductive and nondeterminative. It draws on literary and philosophical studies, which stress the open, fissile and transcendent aspects of metaphor. See, for instance, Karsten Harries, "Metaphor and Transcendence," *CritInq* 5 (1978) 73–90.

Sometimes, too, they are subject to inversion, as in Gen 50:10, where the גֶרֶן הַתְּאֵטֶר ‘the thorn threshing floor’, is oddly oxymoronic,⁴ or in Judg 6:36–40, in which Gideon’s test of YHWH on the threshing floor is part of a general parody of conventions.⁵

As with all prose fiction, the metaphorical and symbolic aspect of literary threshing floors is in tense collaboration with the effect of the real. The narrative purports to be real history, to recount actual events and to impose a symbolic geography on the landscape. The particularity of events and places—“this happened here”—as part of, if you like, a mnemonic enterprise, will counter the effort of unification. The stories are irreducibly different. Araunah may or may not be a real person, but he is not just a literary type; one presupposes a biography, a history that leads us away from the text to other texts or histories.

Threshing floors figure, centrally or incidentally, in seven biblical narratives, two of which concern the cities of Jerusalem and Samaria, representative of southern and northern Israel respectively. Both juxtapose the city and the threshing floor. In 2 Samuel 24 / 1 Chronicles 21, the angel who comes to destroy Jerusalem stops, his sword poised according to the Chronicles account, at the threshing floor of Araunah/Arnon the Jebusite.⁶ In 1 Kings 22 /

4. Joshua Berman argues that the threshing floor is a liminal space that separates the Egyptian and Israelite phases of Jacob’s burial (“Identity Politics and the Burial of Jacob [Gen 50:1–14],” *CBQ* 68 [2006] 11–31 [pp. 29–30]). See also David Volgger, “Die Bestattung Jakobs (Gen 50, 1–14) oder: Die Tora Israels auf dem Weg von Ägypten nach Canaan,” in *En Pase Grammatike kai Sophia: Saggi di linguistica ebraica in onore di Alviero Niccacci* (ed. Gregor Geiger and Massimo Pazzini; Jerusalem: Franciscan, 2011) 357–70 (pp. 363–66). Aaron Demsky solves the exegetical problem of the threshing floor being situated in Transjordan through some creative geographical proposals; he posits, for example, that a different Jordan, near Gaza, is intended (“The Route of Jacob’s Funeral Cortège and the Problem of ‘Eber Hayyarden [Gen 50:10–11],” in *Minhah le-Nahum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honour of His 70th Birthday* [ed. Michael A. Fishbane and Marc Zvi Brettler; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993] 54–64).

5. Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000) 110. She points out that the story of Gideon begins with his threshing in a wine press (Judg 6:12); here, he spreads a fleece on the threshing floor. Nothing is where it should be.

6. He is Araunah in 2 Samuel and Arnon in 1 Chronicles. The relationship of the account in 2 Samuel to that in 1 Chronicles, as well as 4Q51, and the OG LXX, is a matter of considerable dispute. A. Graeme Auld argues that both are dependent on an earlier version, and that in some places Chronicles is more original (“Imag(in)ing Editions of Samuel: The Chronicler’s Contribution,” in *Archaeology of the Books of Samuel: The Entangling of the Textual and Literary History* (ed. Philippe Hugo and Adrian Schencker; VTSup 132; Leiden: Brill, 2010) 119–31. For a detailed comparison, see most recently A. Graeme Auld, “David’s Census: Some Textual and Literary Links,” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera* (ed. Andrés Piquer Otero and Pablo A. Torejano Morales; Leiden: Brill, 2012)

2 Chronicles 18, on the other hand, the threshing floor is specified as being at the gate of the city, the place where all public affairs are conducted. The thesis of this essay will be that the two stories are mirror images of each other; they tell the same story, but in opposite directions.⁷ The one is a foundational story for the temple and hence of the Davidic dynasty; the other dramatizes the baselessness of the pretensions of Ahab and the northern kingdom generally—a major theme of the books of Kings. P. Miscall has explored in depth the parallel between David and Ahab⁸ and its implication that the difference between the two kingdoms, between the arch-hero and arch-villain, can easily be subverted.

In 2 Samuel 24, the threshing floor belongs to Araunah the Jebusite; David buys it to build an altar according to the word of the prophet Gad; it marks the spot where the angel of destruction stopped, and YHWH's wrath turned to compassion (v. 16). The threshing floor is thus the site of hybridity; the transaction between David and Araunah contrasts with or supplements the account of the conquest of Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 5 and corresponds to the statement in Judg 1:21 / Josh 15:63 about the cohabitation of Benjaminites / Judahites and Jebusites "to this very day." The altar marks the collaboration of Canaanites and Israelites. If, as 2 Chr 3:1 suggests, it is the foundation story of the temple,⁹ it characterizes the temple itself as being hybrid, as constructed over

19–34. On the other hand, Yairah Amit assumes the account in 2 Samuel 24 is primary and was revised by the editor of Chronicles in order to provide an etiology of the temple ("Araunah's Threshing Floor: A Lesson in Shaping Historical Memory," in *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* [ed. Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011] 133–44 [pp. 133–35]).

7. The comparison is made by A. Graeme Auld, though he does not mention the threshing floor or the opposition between the two texts ("Bearing the Burden of David's Guilt," in *Vergewenswärtung des Alten Testaments: Beiträge zur biblischen Hermeneutik: Festschrift für Rudolf Smend zum 70. Geburtstag* [ed. Christoph Bultmann, Walter Dietrich, and Christoph Levin; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002] 69–81 [pp. 71–72]).

8. Peter Miscall, *The Workings of Old Testament Narrative* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 22–32. He adds the wife-sister stories to the mix.

9. Opinions differ as to whether the narrative in 2 Samuel 24 is a foundation story for the land on which the temple was constructed. Isaac Kalimi thinks that it is a *hieros logos* for the temple, and that the omission of the specification accords with ancient Near Eastern convention in temple construction stories, in which location is rarely explicit. The narrative was moved to its present site because of its proximity to the accession of Solomon (Isaac Kalimi, "The Land/Mount Moriah, and the Site of the Jerusalem Temple in Biblical Historical Writing," in *Early Jewish Exegesis and Theological Controversy: Studies in Scriptures in the Shadow of Internal and External Controversies* [Assen: van Gorcum, 2002] 9–31 [pp. 21, 25]). Mordechai Cogan notes the necessity for providing Jerusalem with a sacral pedigree because of its absence from ancestral traditions. The LXX version adds to v. 25 the detail that Solomon enlarged the altar ("David's Jerusalem: Notes and Reflections," in *Tehilla le-Moshe: Biblical and*

the site of an agreement between the two peoples, the purchase of land being a sign that David, and Israel with him, has truly come home. It is the first of many interethnic transactions, for instance, between David and Hiram and Solomon and Hiram, that punctuate the account of the building of the temple and ensure that it is a product of the integration of the two peoples, with the accompanying ambivalence.¹⁰ At the base of the temple is the memory of the Canaanite threshing floor, with its associated gods, agricultural processes, and life. Araunah's status as the representative Canaanite/Jebusite is augmented if we read the enigmatic המלך למלך as meaning that Araunah is himself the Jebusite king.¹¹ In buying the threshing floor, David is also buying the kingdom.

Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg [ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, and Jeffrey H. Tigay; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997] 193–202). Philippe Hugo, on the other hand, thinks that this detail was original and was suppressed by the Masoretic editor because of the theological problem of increasing the divinely mandated dimensions of the altar ("The Jerusalem Temple Seen in 2 Samuel According to the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint," in *XIII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, Ljubljana, 2007 [ed. Melvin K. H. Peeters; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008] 187–200 [pp. 194–96]). However, he subsequently changes his mind and states that it is manifestly a secondary addition ("L'Archéologie Textuelle du Temple de Jérusalem: Étude Textuelle du Motif Théologique du Temple en 2 Samuel," in *Archaeology of the Books of Samuel: The Entangling of the Textual and Literary History* [ed. Philippe Hugo and Adrian Schenker; VTSup 132; Leiden: Brill, 2010] 161–212 [pp. 207–8]).

10. Konrad Rupprecht argues it originally was a Jebusite sacred site that was coopted and expanded by Solomon ("Die Zuverlässigkeit der Überlieferung von Salomos Tempelgründung," *ZAW* 89 [1977] 204–14), while Raymond Kuntzman thinks that David purchased it in order to house the Ark, as part of an Israelitization of Jebus ("David, Constructeur du Temple," in *Figures de David à Travers la Bible: XVIIe Congrès de ACFEB, Lille, 1er–5 Septembre 1997* [ed. Louis Desrousseaux and Jacques Vermeylen; Paris: du Cerf, 1999] 139–56 [pp. 153–55]). On the other hand, Ulrich Hübner contends that the Jebusites were a fictional entity created in order to set up an artificial distinction in the pre-Israelite past ("Jerusalem and the Jebusites," in *Jerusalem before Islam* [ed. Zeidan Kafafi and Robert Schick; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007] 17–22 [pp. 18–20]). Zeev Weisman sees the adoption of threshing floors as sacred sites as evidence of the transition from a pastoral to agricultural way of life ("Reflections on the Transition to Agriculture in Israelite Religion," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Israelite Historiography: Presented to Zechariah Kallai* [ed. Gershon Galil and Moshe Weinfeld; Leiden: Brill, 2000] 252–62 [p. 259]).

11. Nicholas Wyatt not only argues that Araunah is the Hurrian or Hittite title of the king but identifies him with Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba, consequently, as the גבירה ("Araunah the Jebusite" and the Throne of David," *Studia Theologica* 39 [1985] 39–53). See, further, Shmuel Yeivin, "The Threshing Floor of Araunah and David's Vision concerning the Building of the Temple," *BM* 34 (1988–89) 268–89 (pp. 270–72) [Hebrew]. He suggests that Araunah is the basis of the etymology of Mt. Moriah. Yeivin's article is, in fact, a translation and transcription of a lecture given in English by his father, Shmuel Yeivin, at one of Minister Ben-Gurion's famous biblical study evenings

The threshing floor is also the turning point between life and death. The angel of YHWH stops there in response to the divine relenting, the ‘change of mind’ (נָחָם; v. 16). The “change of mind” is characteristic of YHWH from the flood story on; but it also marks the difference between David and Saul. Saul is the king about whom YHWH would not change his mind (1 Sam 15:29). Perhaps it is the sight of Jerusalem that causes the failure in divine nerve. It is the seat of the Davidic dynasty and the object of divine affection and despair throughout the Hebrew Bible, serving particularly as the literary and theological focus of the books of Samuel. Jerusalem is the figure of undeserved or miraculous survival, which is, however, a presage of its ultimate destruction.

The anomaly of the preservation of Jerusalem is emphasized by the introduction of the destroying angel. The angel suggests a split in YHWH between implacability and the compassion emphasized by David (v. 14). In Chronicles, the split is already articulated through the attribution of the temptation to a ‘Satan’, שָׂטָן.¹² The gap between YHWH and the messenger opens in the space of

in 1962, and of the fascinating discussion afterwards (in Hebrew). For a dissenting opinion, see Menahem Naor, who thinks it is a scribal error (“The Araunah the Jebusite: Araunah the King,” *BM* 35 [1990] 155–61 [Hebrew]). A general summary of views can be found in Gösta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Israel from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander’s Conquest* (ed. Diana Edelman; JSOTSup 146; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 470–71. He comments on the artificiality of the assumption of any difficulty in the absorption of the Jebusite polity into the Davidic state. For Araunah as a literary rather than historical construct, see Hans-Peter Mathys, “Anmerkungen zu 2Sam 24,” in “*Sieben Augen auf Einem Stein*” (*Sach* 3,9): *Studien zur Literatur des Zweiten Tempels. Festschrift für Ina Willi-Plein zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Friedhelm Hartenstein and Michael Pietsch; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2007) 229–46 (p. 242). In an exhaustive discussion, Meik Gerhards proposes that behind the name Araunah is a trace of the god worshiped on the site, the Indo-European Varuna (“Arauna: Zu einer möglichen Spur indoarischen Einflusses im vordavidischen Jerusalem,” *UF* 40 [2008] 345–404).

12. A. Graeme Auld thinks that the Chronicles version is more original, partially on grounds of wordplay. What the שָׂטָן means and whether it is a divine or human agent is unclear. In any case, as Auld says, no theological problems are solved by projecting divine malevolence onto a subordinate member of the divine court (*1 & 2 Samuel* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011] 604–5). Ryan S. Stokes argues against the שָׂטָן being a human adversary and suggests a comparison with the story of Balaam (“The Devil Made David Do It . . . or Did He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the Satan in 1 Chronicles 21:1,” *JBL* 128 [2009] 91–106). In contrast, Gary N. Knoppers thinks the שָׂטָן is human but has difficulty in accounting for the transgressiveness of the census and the radical difference from Samuel (*1 Chronicles* 10–29 [AB 12A; New York: Doubleday, 2004] 750). See also Pancratius C. Beentjes, “Satan, God, and the Angel(s) in 1 Chronicles 21,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings: Origin, Development, and Reception* (ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Niklas, and Karin Schöpfung; Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007) 139–54 (p. 140). Jan P. Fokkelman comments appropriately that in this story,

the threshing floor, where life and death meet, Jebusite and Israelite, Judah and Israel, to name three of the oppositions in play. In the account in Chronicles, the angel remains poised throughout the rest of the narrative and is responsible for a further gap—the deferral of the construction of the temple to Solomon's reign.

Why is YHWH angry, "once again"? The antecedent may be the famine in 2 Samuel 21, which is caused by the unappeased vengefulness of the Gibeonites.¹³ Nonetheless, it appears unmotivated and recurrent; YHWH is perennially bringing calamity on Israel, with no good reason. Similarly, we do not know why conducting a census is a self-evident sin; attempts at rationalistic explanation are markedly unsuccessful. In Exod 30:12, 'plague' (נֶגֶף) is the consequence of a census conducted without the half-shekel 'ransom for his soul' (כֶּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ).¹⁴ In Numbers 1–3 and 26, the census is a sacred act, preliminary

YHWH is Satanic (*Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel* [4 vols.; Assen: van Gorcum, 1981–93] 3:310). Friedhelm Hartenstein thinks that it reflects an inner tension in the monotheistic God ("Solidarität mit den Toten und Herrschaftordnung: 2Samuel 21,1–14 und 2Samuel 24 im Vergleich mit dem Antigone-Mythos," in *Was ist der Mensch, dass du seiner Gedenkst? [Psalm 8,5]: Aspekte einer Theologischen Anthropologie. Festschrift für Berndt Janowski zum 65. Geburtstag* [ed. Michaela Bauks, Kathrin Liess, and Peter Riede; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008] 123–43 [p. 139]).

13. Many critics perceive the relationship between chaps. 21 and 24 as part of the concentric structure of the so-called appendix to 2 Samuel; see, for instance, Fokkeman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, 309. Auld notes that the phrase otherwise occurs only in Samuel in relation to the outburst against Uzzah in 2 Sam 6:7, suggesting that it is that anger that is rekindled (*1 & 2 Samuel*, 603).

14. Matty Cohen argues that interpreters have misunderstood Exod 30:11–16, in that the half shekel is the point of the whole procedure and not an apotropaic agent against the danger incurred by taking a census. He also disputes that the primary meaning of נֶגֶף is "plague." This is part of a wholesale reconstruction of the historical basis for the story through stripping it of all supernatural elements; for example, the 70,000 deaths were, in fact, the result of a civil war ("II Sam 24 ou l'histoire d'un décret royal avorté," *ZAW* 113 [2001] 17–40 [pp. 23–27]). However, that there are two divinely mandated censuses in Numbers militates against Cohen's interpretation. Baruch A. Levine agrees with Cohen in separating Exod 30:11–16 from the accounts of the census in Numbers and with the issue at stake in our text. He argues that in Exod 30:11–16, the precaution is necessary because the tabernacle is deadly to nonauthorized persons, while in Numbers the census is purely military. In our text, David's sin consists in attempting to conscript Israelites for wars not sanctioned by God, with all the attendant social disruption ("May YHWH your God accept you [II Sam: 24.23]: The Altar David erected in the threshing floor of Araunah," *ErIsr* 24 [1993] 122–29 [pp. 125–26; Hebrew]). Many researchers, including Matty Cohen, attribute the motivation for the census to the imposition of compulsory military service. In an absorbing contribution, Mathys argues for the influence of Achaemenid military censuses on the construction of the Israelite past and, in particular, David's archetypal sin ("Anmerkungen zu 2Sam

to the departure from Mt. Sinai or the entrance to the Promised Land; in Numbers 26, it is contiguous to an account of a plague. It is thus at the border between the sacred and the sacrilegious, attracting danger to the individual **שׂנִי** as well as enrolling him (it is exclusively male) into the sacred body politic. It is a sign of bureaucratization, the transition from a person to a number (hence interpretations that see it as a register for pre-Solomonic corvée labor, preliminary to the construction of the temple).¹⁵ In Exodus 30, too, it is for the sake of the construction of the tabernacle. However, if it is a sin, it is not performed at David's initiative. Interpretations in terms of pride are beside the point. Yhwh entraps David by commanding him to "count Israel and Judah" (2 Sam 24:1). As in 1 Kings 13 and 22, YHWH impels a character to incur guilt without their knowledge or intention. As with Saul, David is the subject of a malevolent divine command, which may be related to YHWH's ambivalence about the monarchy.¹⁶ The closest parallels, however, are with YHWH's command to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22¹⁷ and with David's other paradigmatic sin with Bathsheba, conveniently placed in view.¹⁸ As in the latter story, Joab acts as David's foil, as his conscience. As there, too, both the punishment and its mitigation are transmitted through a prophet: Nathan in 2 Samuel 12 and Gad here.

David expresses typically fulsome remorse, disingenuously or sincerely, even though he was not ultimately responsible (vv. 10, 17). The attitude of repentance establishes the relationship between David and YHWH as well as David's skill in manipulating the situation. But it is full of ironies, not the least

24," 234–36). Levine thinks that 2 Samuel 24 consists of two narratives, one royal, the other priestly, that have been conjoined, and that vv. 1 and 16 were subsequently added. For a survey of different approaches to the textual history, see P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB 9; New York: Doubleday, 1984) 514–18.

15. The most recent example of this approach is Kyle R. Greenwood, "Labor Pains: The Relationship between David's Census and Corvée Labor," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20 (2010) 467–78.

16. Likewise, Robert Polzin sees the divine wrath as resulting from YHWH's continued malevolence against the monarchy, which will only be consummated in 2 Kings 25. Thus, it thus reflects the Deuteronomists' own ideological ambivalence (*David and the Deuteronomist* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001] 212).

17. A. Graeme Auld notes the connection and suggests throughout the article that the author of Genesis 22 was influenced by 2 Samuel 24 rather than vice versa ("Reading Genesis after Samuel," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* [ed. Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmidt, and Baruch J. Schwartz; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011] 459–69 [p. 466]). It does not seem to me, however, that there are strong arguments one way or the other. Mathys makes an equally suggestive comparison with Genesis 14; in both, fictitious indigenous Jerusalemite kings engage in a symbolic transaction with an archetypal Israelite hero ("Anmerkungen zu 2 Sam 24," 243–46).

18. Auld sees a parabolic relationship between the two texts ("Bearing the Burden of David's Guilt," 75–76).

being that YHWH has already changed his mind (v. 16).¹⁹ Both the anger and the clemency are unaccountable.²⁰

In 2 Chr 3:1, the threshing floor is identified as the site of the sacrifice of Isaac, and the two stories follow the same trajectory. In both there is a divine test or temptation; in both a split between the angel of YHWH and the deity itself; in both a last minute reprieve; and in both the establishment of a cultic site. In both the protagonist is unaware of the divine will or malice, the underlying uncertainty. Many have also noted the parallel with the purchase of the cave of Machpelah.²¹ But there is a further connection with Abraham. In Genesis 14, Abram is blessed and receives gifts from Melchizedek, king of Salem, who represents an autochthonous YHWH-worshiper. Here, too, the altar is built with the collaboration of Jebusite and Israelite monarchs. It exposes the falsity of the difference between the two cultures.

Every stage of the ark and temple narrative is accompanied by outbreaks of divine violence. In particular, our story is linked to that of Uzzah, in 2 Samuel 6, which takes place at the “threshing floor of Nacon” (6:6). There, too, the threshing floor is associated with death and inadvertent sacrilege. This may suggest divine reluctance, that the threshing floor of Araunah is not just a foundation but also an abyss. As the site of the temple—and here, too, there is a gap between Samuel and Chronicles—it also represents resistance to the temple and to any edifice, an inherent or indigenous entropy. In V. Turner’s terms, it combines structure and antistructure.²²

Our second example of an urban threshing floor is the one outside the gates of Samaria in 1 Kings 22. Once again, there are two kings, representative of the factitious unity of Israel and Judah. Just as in 2 Samuel 24, the separate enumeration of Israel and Judah both records their union and anticipates their division. Here, however, the Davidide is transgressively under the command of the Omride. They sit in their “clothes” on royal thrones and watch the theatre

19. Like Job, David never knows that he is a victim of divine entrapment or that his words and deeds have no effect on events, a point especially stressed by Fokkelman (*Narrative Art and Poetry*, 3:303–26). Alexander Rofé argues that v. 16 is a later interpretation, to introduce the idea of YHWH’s repentance (“4QSam in the Light of Historical-Literary Criticism,” in *Biblische und Judaistische Studien: Festschrift für Paolo Sacchi* [ed. Angelo Vivian; Bern: Peter Lang, 1990] 110–19 [pp. 111–12]).

20. Walter Brueggemann stresses the unconscious and playful elements in the narrative, as part of its deconstruction of royal pretensions. David never quite knows or controls everything in his life. The playfulness is illustrated by the deadly game of Russian roulette with which Gad presents him in vv. 11–13 (“2 Samuel 21–24: An Appendix of Deconstruction?” *CBQ* 50 [1988] 383–97 [p. 392]).

21. For example, Sean McDonough, “‘And David Was Old, Advanced in Years’: 2 Samuel xxiv 18–25, 1 Kings i 1, and Genesis xxiii–xxiv,” *VT* 49 (1999) 128–31; Matthews, “Physical Space,” 13.

22. See Auld, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 619.

performed by the 400 prophets and Zedekiah. There is, however, a joker in the pack, Micaiah, who breaks the script by presenting a play within the play. In this play, as in 2 Samuel 24, YHWH wishes to entice Ahab to his doom; as there, there is a split between YHWH and his destructive agent, as though YHWH dissociates himself from himself.²³ The inner theater of the divine council is set up to absolve YHWH of responsibility, to cross the boundary between truth and its subversion, and to disguise YHWH's breach of his promise to Ahab in the previous chapter, in which he spared his life in response to Ahab's repentance.²⁴

Here, the threshing floor is a mirror image of Samaria and, by implication, the entire Northern Kingdom; as in 2 Samuel 24, it is the site of an oracle, a meta-communication on the narrative. As a threshing floor, it is a metonymy for the fecundity of the kingdom, just as the 400 prophets testify to its divine inspiration and authorization. As an empty, ritualized space, though, it opens up the vacuity of the city; it makes it the antithesis of Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 24, except that Jerusalem and all cities will be destroyed. The kings wear their clothes, their royal insignia, which mask their mortality, their corporeality, and their delusions. To the extent that the book of Kings focuses on the Northern Kingdom, on the grand aside to the Davidic destiny, it is about the hollowness of kings. The prophets charge around, sincerely proclaiming victory, not knowing that their will has been suborned. Only the ultimately validated prophet, Micaiah, claims to know the underlying story.

The threshing floor opens out in a parenthesis between the messenger being sent to fetch Micaiah in v. 9 and his arrival in v. 13. It is at the center of the first part of the narrative containing the kings, the prophets, and the entire politicosacral establishment, with its vision of a triumphant future. Outside it is Micaiah, the excluded, skeptical voice, who only gives the king bad prophecies and who resists the officer's temptation in v. 13. Micaiah is in the long line of prophets in Kings who oppose kings; he takes the place of Elijah in the previous chapter. It may be true, as Ehud Ben Zvi says, that from a pragmatic

23. Evangelia G. Dafni argues that the spirit comes from outside the divine circle, as in Job 1–2, and that evil can never originate with YHWH. This would absolve YHWH of responsibility for his explicit intention, as expressed in v. 20 (“רוח שקר” und falsche Prophetie in I Reg 22,” ZAW 112 [2000] 365–85 [pp. 379–81]). Another example of an apologetic reading is R. Walter L. Moberly, “Does God Lie to His Prophets? The Story of Micaiah ben Imlah As a Test Case,” *Harvard Theological Review* 96 (2003) 8–15. He proposes that, like Nathan's parable in 2 Samuel 12, Micaiah's report of his vision is his imaginative attempt to induce Ahab to change his mind.

24. Alan J. Hauser thinks that it is ambiguous whether the divine retraction in 1 Kgs 21:29 refers to Ahab or only to his house (“Should Ahab Go into Battle or Not? Ambiguity as a Rhetorical Device in 1 Kings 22,” in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts* [ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Überlacker; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002] 141–54 [p. 145]). However, the decision “not to bring about the evil in his days” would suggest that he, too, would be spared.

point of view he has been a supremely unsuccessful prophet, because Ahab has prospered, as far as we can tell.²⁵ But from the point of view of the greater story, the prophets of doom are justified by the calamity that will befall the Omrides and the Northern Kingdom.

The parenthesis concerning the threshing floor is matched by the much greater one in which Micaiah describes the scene in the divine court. The two scenes schematically parallel each other: YHWH sits on his throne as the kings sit on theirs, and so on. The spirit of falsehood is in an analogous position to Micaiah, as the one member of the divine council who gives the correct answer.²⁶ The switch to the inner space corresponds to the change from the designation of Ahab as “the king of Israel,” otherwise used exclusively of the Israelite sovereign except Jehoshaphat, to YHWH, calling him by his first name in v. 20.²⁷ It introduces Micaiah’s dilemma: is he going to tell the truth in

25. Ehud Ben Zvi, “A Contribution to the Intellectual History of Yehud: The Story of Micaiah and Its Function within the Discourse of Persian Period Literati,” in *The Historian and the Bible: Essays in Honour of Lester L. Grabbe* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Philip R. Davies; LHBOTS 530; London: T. & T. Clark, 2010) 89–103 (p. 94). His thesis is that stories such as 1 Kings 22, Jonah, and Genesis 18 were a safe way for the literati of Persian-period Yehud to explore unresolvable paradoxes, such as those of unfulfilled prophecy or divine miscommunication. Ben Zvi’s approach is more nuanced than that of Kurt L. Noll, who argues that the story is an antiprophetic satire in which it is obvious to everyone, Ahab included, that Micaiah is a false prophet (“The Deconstruction of Deuteronomism in the Former Prophets: Micaiah ben Imlah as Example,” in *Far from Minimal: Celebrating the Life and Influence of Philip Davies* [ed. Duncan Burns and John W. Rogerson; LHBOTS 484; London: T. & T. Clark, 2012] 325–34).

26. Dafni makes the comparison and also includes Isaiah 6 (“רוח שקר” und falsche Prophetie in I Reg 22,” 368). Moberly suggests that the heavenly court is not in a different time and space but represents the spiritual dimension of the court scene below (“Does God Lie?” 9). Yonatan Grossman argues the parallel at length but contrariwise, sees the messenger as the structural equivalent of the spirit. He notes the ironic correlation between the word for the time-serving ‘messenger’ (מלאך) and the host of heaven (“The Story of Micaiah ben Imlah and the death of Ahab [1 Kings 22]: Involved Editing,” *Iyyunei Miqra u-Parshanut* 10 (2011) 157–78 [pp. 171–72; Hebrew]).

27. Robert L. Hubbard argues that the anonymity is a rhetorical device that establishes distance between the reader and the king and foreshadows his effacement (“‘Old What’s-His-Name’: Why the King in 1 Kings 22 Has No Name,” in *God’s Word in Our World*, vol. 1: *Biblical Studies in Honour of Simon John de Vries* [ed. Deborah L. Ellens, Isaac Kalimi, and Rolf Knierim; JSOTSup 388; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004] 294–314). However, the switch to the personal name is typical of speech by God to an Israelite king (p. 306), because the king is subordinate to YHWH. Hubbard accordingly rejects the redactional approach to the text, according to which a folktale concerning an anonymous king was subsequently incorporated into the Ahab cycle. Grossman suggests convincingly that the title stresses that Ahab, not Jehoshaphat, is the real king, and that, moreover, his proper name in v. 20, as communicated through Micaiah, attempts to address him as an autonomous person, as distinct from his role (“Story of Micaiah,” 168, 173).

conformity with his prophetic mission and thus betray the divine secret, or is he going to tell a lie, as in v. 15, and thereby remain true to the divine animosity to Ahab? Is he a traitor to God or the king?²⁸ Micaiah is caught between two allegiances, but in the next verse the conflict is transferred to the prophets in general and Zedekiah in particular. Until now we have thought of them as false prophets who predict what the king wants, and Ahab indicates as much in v. 8. But now it is clear that they are, in fact, acting under the influence of the spirit of YHWH and in conformity to his will.²⁹ Zedekiah strikes Micaiah on the cheek and asks: "How did the spirit of YHWH pass from me to speak with you?" If we take this as a genuine question and not as simple irony, then it acknowledges that Micaiah is the addressee of the divine word and, moreover, that Zedekiah has been its recipient. Why Zedekiah strikes him we do not know, though it parallels 1 Kgs 20:35–37.³⁰ It may, however, mark a moment

28. Grossman thinks it is a false paradox, because if the scene has been revealed to Micaiah, it is only so that it should be communicated, an authorization confirmed by the formula "Therefore hear the word of YHWH" in v. 19 ("Story of Micaiah," 174). In that case, it is YHWH's revelation that is self-defeating.

29. Jeffries M. Hamilton notes that they are never called false or royal prophets ("Caught in the Nets of Prophecy? The Death of King Ahab and the Character of God," *CBQ* 56 [1994] 649–63 [p. 654]). They have no greater access to the king than Micaiah. He argues that the issue was the trustworthiness of prophecy and that the seeking of second opinions was common practice in the ancient Near East. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer likewise thinks that the 400 prophets were true prophets and that Ahab could have avoided his fate, for instance, through repentance ("Prophecy as a Way of Cancelling Prophecy: The Strategic Uses of Foreknowledge," *ZAW* 117 [2005] 329–50 [p. 338]). In contrast, Meir Sternberg is representative of a large number of scholars who unambiguously categorize the prophets as false (*The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Narrative and the Drama of Reading* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986] 407). His main argument is the inconceivability of YHWH championing Naboth's murderer. In a very sophisticated discussion, Suzanne Last Stone considers the possibility, drawn from the Talmud (*b.Sanh.* 89a), that Zedekiah may have been sincere but willfully mistaken ("Between Truth and Trust: The False Prophet as Self-Deceiver?" *Hebrew Political Studies* 4 [2009] 337–66). She also notes that the oracle the prophets and Micaiah deliver might be ambiguous and deceptive, in Delphic fashion, because it does not specify which king would prevail (p. 352). See also Benjamin D. Sommer, who thinks that the prophets are also deceived by the ambiguity of v. 6, as evidenced by their interpretation in vv. 11 and 12 ("Prophecy as Translation: Ancient Israelite Conceptions of the Human Factor in Prophecy," in *Bringing the Hidden to Light: The Process of Interpretation. Studies in Honor of Stephen A. Geller* [ed. Kathryn F. Kravitz and Diane M. Sharon; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007] 271–90 [p. 281]). The interpretation of the prophecy as ambiguous goes back to Hugo Gressmann in 1921, as reported by Wolfgang Roth ("The Story of the Prophet Micaiah [1 Kings 22] in Historical-Critical Interpretation," *The Biblical Mosaic: Changing Perspectives* [ed. Robert M. Polzin and Eugene Rothman; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982] 105–37 [p. 116]).

30. 1 Kings 20 and 22 are very closely related thematically and verbally. Historical-critical scholarship, from Wellhausen on, tended to group them together as part of a

of revelation, perhaps of despair, that Zedekiah has been deceived by the spirit of YHWH and opens a gulf between the two prophets and the two prophetic agendas.³¹

There is a further difference between the two texts. In 1 Kings 22, the ritual theater is a substitute for the impending catastrophe; kings can play their games, but the ground opens up beneath them, in conformity to a more implacable destiny, such as the nemesis for Naboth's blood.³² The scene is elaborately staged, with its 400 prophets its symbolic drama. But everyone, including Jehoshaphat and Ahab, knows that it is a sham. In 2 Samuel 24, we end with a dialogue between David and Araunah in which David refuses Araunah's offer of the threshing floor and the sacrificial necessities and insists on payment. It is theater, but it also establishes a human bond. Despite Araunah's obedience, we see them looking at each other face to face.

C. Bell describes ritual (and ritualization) in terms of power, miscognition, and creativity.³³ All clearly are at work here: each scene, no matter how

cycle of stories dealing with Aramean wars as opposed to the stories of Elijah and to regard 1 Kings 21 as an insertion. Dwight W. van Winkle argues for the coherence of all three chapters ("1 Kings 20–22 and True and False Prophecy," in *Goldene Äpfel in Silbenen Schallen. Congress Volume, Leuven 1989* [ed. Klaus-Dietrich Schunk and Matthias Augustin; Bern: Lang, 1992] 9–23). For a representative summary of historical-critical scholarship up to 1976, see Roth, "The Story of the Prophet Micaiah," 105–37. Simon J. de Vries proposes that it is a combination of two originally independent Micaiah narratives, because the story as we have it has a "meaninglessly complex and disjointed structure" (*Prophet against Prophet: The Role of the Micaiah Narrative [1 Kings 22] in the Development of Early Prophetic Tradition* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978] 26–30, quoting p. 31). Moberly examines de Vries's argument in detail and concludes that he fails "to discern the structure and sequence that the text in fact has" ("Does God Lie?" 16–18; quoting p. 18). I suggest below that one reason for the story's survival is its esthetic appeal. Burke O. Long argues for the unity of the text on structural and thematic grounds (*1 Kings with an Introduction to Historical Literature* [FOTL 9; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984] 234–35). Steven L. McKenzie posits a complex editorial history and that the story was one of the latest, post-Deuteronomistic additions to the book of Kings (*The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* [Leiden: Brill, 1991] 88–93).

31. Alexander Rofé argues that they represent two kinds of prophecy. Zedekiah and the other 400 prophets are ecstatic prophets, inspired by the spirit, while Micaiah is a classical prophet, who reports what he sees and hears. Rofé accordingly dates the narrative to the period of classical prophecy, in the late monarchy (*The Prophetic Stories* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988] 142–52).

32. Robert Goldenberg notes that Talmudic tradition identified the spirit with that of Naboth, to whose demand for vengeance YHWH was compelled to accede despite his disapproval; see *b. Sanh.* 102b ("The Problem of False Prophecy: Talmudic Interpretations of Jeremiah 28 and 1 Kings 22," *The Biblical Mosaic: Changing Perspectives* [ed. Robert M. Polzin and Eugene Rothman; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982] 87–103 [p. 96]).

33. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and *idem*, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford

choreographed, is manipulated by the characters. But it is power and the illusions of power that are central here. David, at divine instigation, runs roughshod over his ministers' objections and performs the census as a sign of bureaucratic control; he ends by self-abasement and refraining from exerting his authority. As always, for David, powerlessness is an instrument of power.³⁴ For Ahab, the ritual display prefigures his own ritualized death; his power is powerlessness. The threshing floor is a sign of royal authority, of the rituals of state, and of the orchestration and coercion of the divine will through the domestication of prophecy; as always in Kings, the phalanxes of prophets are inversely proportional to their veracity. There is an inner scene, imagined or not by Micaiah, in which YHWH himself is powerless, impotent to deceive Ahab. There is only the Puck-like רוח שקר, the 'spirit of falseness'. All is illusion. The wind/spirit is what separates the wheat from the chaff, the false from the true.³⁵ What Micaiah reveals, according to Zedekiah, the chief of the court prophets, is the truth of falsity, the gorgeous panoply that leaves not a wrack behind.

E. Ben Zvi has written substantially on the role of both these texts in the social memory of the Late Persian / early Hellenistic period.³⁶ He argues that for readers and intellectuals of this period, the two versions of the stories in Samuel–Kings and Chronicles played off each other and provided opportunity for creativity and reflection. The story about Micaiah in 2 Chronicles 18 hardly differs at all from that in Kings, except that it is in a different book. In Kings, it is part of a whole series of stories about prophets that counterpoint the nefarious deeds of the Omrides; in Chronicles, it belongs to the account of Jehoshaphat's reign and is the only story about the prophets of the kingdom of Israel shared between the two texts. There are accordingly different emphases and different questions asked. For example, why are even idealized Judean kings, such as

University Press, 1997). Bell's main argument is that "ritualization is a strategy for the construction of a limited and limiting power relationship," which involves "consent and resistance, misunderstanding and appropriation" (ibid., 8). See the special memorial issue on Bell, edited by Kevin O'Neill, for a general discussion of her work (*History of Religions* 51/4 [2012]).

34. David M. Gunn has convincingly pointed this out (*The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* [JSOTSup 6; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978] 90–114).

35. Larry Herr argues for the ambiguity of רוח in the text and its vacuous and scatological connotations ("Polysemy of *rûah* in I Kings 22: 19–25," in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea* [ed. David Merling; Berrien Springs: Institute of Archaeology–Andrews University, 1997] 29–31).

36. For 1 Kings 22 / 2 Chronicles 18, see p. 89 n. 25, above. 2 Samuel 24 / 1 Chronicles 18 is discussed by Ehud Ben Zvi in a forthcoming essay: "Remembering Pre-Israelite Jerusalem in Late Persian Yehud: Mnemonic Preferences, Memories and Social Imagination," in *Urban Dreams and Realities: The City in Ancient Cultures* (ed. Adam Kemezis; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). My thanks are due to Ehud for allowing me to see this essay in advance.

Jehoshaphat, fatally attracted to the house of Omri, and, correspondingly, why do the righteous, such as the readers/composers of Chronicles, have a propensity to consort with the wicked? Ben Zvi also discusses various elements that make the story of Micaiah memorable, such as its being a good story and, as aforementioned, that it provided an opportunity for the readers/composers to explore unanswerable questions, such as divine responsibility for evil.

Ben Zvi considers 2 Samuel 24 in the context of the greatly reduced but ideologically central city of Jerusalem in the late 4th–early 3rd centuries B.C.E. For the literati, especially those who made explicit the identification of the threshing floor with Mt. Moriah, it provided a pedigree for Jerusalem in patriarchal history, to compensate for its embarrassing absence from the Pentateuch. As the conqueror of Jerusalem, David was the true founder of the temple, but at the same time, he was an Abraham *redivivus*. Just as important, however, was the exchange with Araunah/Arnon, which repeats Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah. Ben Zvi argues that, for the Jerusalem elite, the sacrality of the temple had to be an intrinsic as well as contingent quality, inherent in the place as well as conferred by monarchs. In other words, it had to be sacred even before David conquered it as well as after the dynasty disappeared. In addition, the temple was ideologically a zone of peace and edenic tranquillity, as indicated by the name of the temple builder, Solomon, and his supposedly peaceful reign. Thus, the acquisition of the temple site had to be nonviolent and, consequently, an image constructed of benevolent, indigenous inhabitants who voluntarily ceded territory and were allied to idealized Israelites, namely Abraham and David. The threshing floor signifies precisely the potential for life and fertility.

I would like to supplement Ben Zvi's analysis with what I have elsewhere called "the poetics of memory."³⁷ By the poetics of memory, I mean the way that memories become the objects of thought and imagination.³⁸ My approach is not, in fact, very different from that of Ben Zvi, though my theoretical resources are drawn from cognitive science and literary criticism, whereas he is immersed in social theory. For instance, Ben Zvi's literary analysis of the appeal of the story of Micaiah is exemplary. I would be looking, however, at the ways stories are made memorable, at the interaction of semantic and episodic memory systems, and of different emotive and sensory effects. For example, it is clear that the version of the story of Arnon/Araunah in 1 Chronicles 21 is a revision of that in 2 Samuel 24, in that it both adds significant and memorable details, such as the angel with the sword stretched out between earth and

37. Francis Landy, "Notes Towards a Poetics of Memory in Ancient Israel," in *Remembering and Forgetting in Ancient Israel* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 331–45.

38. *Ibid.*, 337.

heaven and Arnon's four sons hiding from the sight, and omits less memorable details, such as Joab's itinerary.³⁹

Semantic memory is the store of acquired, culturally coded knowledge; it is synchronic and encyclopedic. Our texts enter semantic memory insofar as they constitute part of an authoritative canon, which is inculcated and ever available. Words and images can only be interpreted by drawing on semantic memory; for example, the significance of the threshing floor relies both on practical knowledge and an awareness of symbolic connotations drawn from literature. Episodic memory refers to the narrative, syntactic dimension of memory, to the stories and events with which we construct our lives. Episodic memory is thus diachronic; through it we obtain a sense of time and, in particular, of the past. This works in two ways: it enables us to live in the past, to identify with characters in a narrative, and it reinforces their pastness. In reading these texts, we—and readers/composers in the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic period or whenever—can and could not but be aware that the events they narrate happened in the remote past, before the catastrophe, when miracles were still possible, and so on. The past is another country and feeds our capacity to imagine alternative worlds. As well as its salience for the present, on which I think Ben Zvi puts most stress, there is also its difference.

Narratives are memorable, not only because they are vehicles for exploring problems, such as that of false prophecy or divine malevolence, but because they carry emotive and sensory weight.⁴⁰ The more emotionally compelling a story, the more it is likely to be remembered, because it activates different and, from an evolutionary perspective, more profound regions of the brain. Emotive memories involve a constant interaction between the amygdala, associated with the emotions, and the hippocampus, responsible for memory.⁴¹ Likewise, stories have their sensory correlates. The spectacle of the 400 prophets charging around with Zedekiah at their head, wearing horns, is highly arousing.

Emotional memories attached to stories are subjective and inextricable from their paradigmatic function. Perhaps the best way of approaching them is

39. See p. 84 n. 12 above for Auld's thesis that both texts were based on a preceding original and that in some respects the Chronicles account is primary. However, the argument from literary memorability seems to me to be decisive. It is more likely that a story would be expanded in order to fill in gaps and introduce interesting details than that a story would omit such details. Likewise, less memorable material may be elided. For the argument in general with copious illustration, see Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), esp pp. 49–74.

40. Landy, "Poetics of Memory" 340–41.

41. Daniel L. Schacter, Angela H. Gutchess, and Elizabeth A. Kensinger, "Specificity of Memory: Implications for Individual and Collective Remembering," in *Memory in Mind and Culture* (ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 85–111 (pp. 103–4).

through their subsequent usage. What phrases stick in the collective memory? I can give two examples from 2 Samuel 24/1 Chronicles 21: (1) David's prayer in 2 Sam 24:14 introduces the penitential *Tahanun* prayer used in the Jewish daily liturgy. David is constructed thereby as the model of penitence. (2) The image of the angel with his sword stretched out toward Jerusalem appears in the Passover Haggadah. There it breaks the frame of exegetical comments exclusively focused on the Exodus.⁴² The sudden transfer of attention is memorable because it is unexpected; moreover, it articulates the parallel between the Exodus and our text through the appearance of the 'destroyer' (הַמַּשְׁחִית). More fundamentally, however, it suggests an abiding threat that the sword is always poised against Jerusalem. This, indeed, is a motif throughout the Haggadah, in which deliverance is from a night of utter destruction, which may ever recur.

Sensory effects include esthetic effects. A text may be memorable because it is beautiful.⁴³ A familiar technique for producing an effect of symmetry is chiasmus, the inversion of the first half of the story in the second.⁴⁴ The story of Micaiah is a complex, interwoven, and circular narrative, in which we meet hesitation, doubt, and surprise, as more and more levels of meaning are uncovered. The threshing floor may be a metaphor for the narrative itself, in which the matching layers surround an inner core. But, as we have seen, if on the outer level the story is about the hollowness of kings, at the center there is a baffled deity. The unanswered question the king of Israel asks his servants in v. 3 is echoed by what YHWH presents to his attendants in v. 20. The spirit spins its web of deceit, which draws in the prophets, Ahab, Jehoshaphat, and perhaps even Micaiah, but at the center of the concentric circles there is a gap between YHWH and the spirit. Micaiah's vision may be the key that unlocks the whole story, but its appeal as a story that gives pleasure may be precisely that it promises truth and gives us falsehood, so that we experience the sensation of the rug being pulled out from under our feet. The story lures us with its enigma, which is ultimately that of Ahab, Israel, and indeed, all the characters.

42. The Midrashic peg is the word נְטוּיָה, shared between 1 Chr 21:16 and the Haggadic source text in Deut 26:8. 1 Chronicles 21:16 is the proof-text for the "outstretched arm" in Deut 26:8, referring to the divine sword.

43. The judgment that the text is beautiful may not command universal assent (see de Vries's comment in n. 30). Moreover, the concept of beauty may be treated with postmodern suspicion. An additional difficulty is the ineffability of beauty: esthetic judgments are not amenable to exhaustive analysis. Nonetheless, that this narrative is beautiful may be a common response and account for its memorability. Its beauty can be correlated with its symmetry, combined with asymmetrical elements that break the frame. The compelling quality of the narrative results also from its mystery, emanating from its central parable. A recent treatment of these issues is found in Richard Moran, "Kant, Proust, and the Appeal of Beauty," *CritInq* 38 (2012) 298–331.

44. Grossman proposes another structure; he analyzes vv. 5–14 and 15–28 as parallel sequences ("Story of Micaiah," 162–63). Any literary text may exhibit several structures simultaneously.

Another element that makes a story memorable is humor. The story of Micaiah, though not at first sight that of David and Araunah/Arnon, is extraordinarily funny, as are most of the prophetic stories in Kings. Ahab summons his 400 prophets and Jehoshaphat asks, "Isn't there one more?" Zedekiah charging around with his horns may seem bizarre, ludicrous or portentous, and in any case conforms to the status of prophets as marginal people, liminally human and divine, sane and mad. Ahab does not like Micaiah because he always gives him bad prophecies but demands the truth from him and refuses to accept the "good" prophecy he apparently wants. Then, when Micaiah obliges him with the truth, he turns round to Jehoshaphat and says, "You see! Didn't I tell you he never gives me good prophecies?" The sense of the comic here arises from Ahab's self-contradiction, of which he seems blissfully unaware, and the disparity between the reality principle and the pleasure principle. Ahab is all too human—as he is indeed throughout the Ahab narratives—and exemplifies human absurdity.⁴⁵ The comic may preempt and foreshadow the tragic, Ahab's death and Micaiah's imprisonment, but it also suggests a dimension or potential in all the prophetic narratives in Kings. It is all a game emanating from the divine council, at the end of which there is death, the destruction of the two kingdoms, and emptiness. It is perhaps not quite Gloucester's "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods / They kill us for their sport" (*King Lear* 4.1. 36–37), but it may be close to the Indian concept of *lila*, the play of life and death in which everything is interwoven.

There is no reason to privilege the Late Persian / Early Hellenistic period or these two threshing floor stories, except for the constraints of this volume. The Late Persian / Early Hellenistic period has a special status in that it designates an era when the texts of our Hebrew Bible were more or less complete and achieving authoritative status, before the diversification of interpretative communities, which we already see in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It also marks the last epoch when the books were conceived of and composed as wholes rather than as a source of prooftexts and logia, to be interpreted and recombined in endless permutations.⁴⁶ In principle, however, this reading could apply to any era of the stories' histories or, indeed, to their composition. I may be the first person to have noticed the structural similarity and opposition of the two threshing floor stories, which I would attribute to a textual unconscious, mulling over the similarities and differences of David and Ahab, Judah and Israel. All the stories relate to each other, more or less, sooner or later. A third threshing floor story is Ruth, which I have somewhat arbitrarily excluded from this discussion,

45. On the importance of the "all too human" in the biblical comic vision, see especially J. William Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) 7.

46. James Kugel compares the circulation of Midrashic interpretations to that of jokes ("Two Introductions to Midrash," *Prooftexts* 3 [1983] 131–55 [pp. 145–47]).

because it takes place at some distance from the symbolically significant town in which Ruth transpires. The threshing floor scene in Ruth 3 shares several of the motifs of our two threshing floor stories.⁴⁷ There, life and death meet; as in 2 Samuel 24/1 Chronicles 18, it is the place of the encounter of the Israelite and the idealized non-Israelite and is foundational for the Davidic dynasty. On the other hand, it introduces the motif of gender. The foreigner is a woman who takes over the narrative. A full reading would involve a discussion of the other threshing floor scenes I mentioned at the beginning of this essay, such as the threshing floor of Nakon, that of Gideon, and the thorn threshing floor of Genesis 50. But there are many other paradigms into which both texts fit; for instance, the divine dialogue scene in Job 1–2 and the heavenly council in Isaiah 6.

The two stories have an inversely anomalous relationship to their context. 2 Samuel 24 is sandwiched uncomfortably between David's triumphant song and the list of his warriors and the account of his death. In 1 Chronicles 21, however, it is prefatory to the long and central narrative of the building of the temple. The story of Micaiah, on the other hand, is an intrinsic element in the history of the fall of the Omrides in Kings but somewhat of an aside in Chronicles. Both thereby become metanarratives, narratives that comment on the narrative as a whole, or indeed, in the case of Micaiah, on narrative in general. 2 Samuel 24 casts a bleak light on the preceding narrative as one of continued and inexplicable divine animosity towards Israel. 1 Kings 22 suggests that it is all a tissue of lies and deceptions; that our lives are fictions, fabricated over nothing.⁴⁸ We die, leaving not a wrack behind.

47. I have discussed this scene in "Ruth and the Romance of Realism, or Deconstructing History," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (1994) 285–317, republished in my *Beauty and the Engima and Other Essays on the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 312; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001) 218–51.

48. Joshua Landy argues that the role of fictions is to create necessary illusions, which are a sign of our creativity (*How to Do Things with Fictions* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012] 89–92).

Palaces as Sites of Memory and Their Impact on the Construction of an Elite “Hybrid” (Local-Global) Cultural Identity in Persian-Period Literature

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The main term for *palace* is ‘the house of the king’ בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ (e.g., 2 Sam 11:2, 9; 2 Kgs 14:14; 18:15) or, when the context is clear, simply ‘the house’ הַבַּיִת (e.g., Exod 7:28; 1 Kgs 4:6; 2 Kgs 11:6), which may denote both the edifice of the palace and the institution of the court. This ambivalence is ubiquitous and corresponds to Greek, Persian, and Mesopotamian use. In light of the wide variety of uses of the terms in these languages, one should not expect to find a consistent use in the Bible.¹

The word אֶרְמוֹן (‘[fortified] palace’ as in *HALOT*) is usually translated ‘citadel’. Its referent is a (often royal) fortified place (e.g., Amos 1:40, and which may well be directly associated with the residence of the king [see 1 Kgs 16:18; 2 Kgs 15:25]). The term אֶרְמוֹן is translated in the Septuagint as βάρτις in Ps 48:4, 14 (LXX 47:4, 14); Lam 2:5 and 2 Chr 36:19. (In Ps 45:9 [LXX 45:9], it stands for another Hebrew term that refers to a palace, namely, הֵיכָל.) The Greek translators seemed to think it paralleled the Hebrew term בֵּיכָה (cf. Dan 8:2, MT and TH), which also tends to be translated ‘citadel’ or ‘tower’. There is reference to a בֵּיכָה in Jerusalem, explicitly separate from the house of the governor in Neh 2:8 (cf. Neh 7:2), but significantly in Chronicles, the term is used for the temple (2 Chr 29:1, 19). In Esther, however, where the word is used more times than anywhere else in the HB, it is at times unclear whether its referent is just the

1. For the Greek use, see, for instance, Maria Brosius, “New out of Old? Court and Court Ceremonies in Achaemenid Persia,” in *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* (ed. Antony J. S. Spawforth; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 25. The Hellenistic terms are presented in several essays in Gunnar Brands and Wolfram Hoepfner, eds., *Basileia: Die Paläste der hellenistischen Könige* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1996). See especially the contributions by Wolfram Hoepfner (“Zum Typus der Basileia und der königlichen Andrones,” 1–43) and Bernd Funck (“Beobachtung zum Begriff des Herrscherpalastes und seiner machtpolitischen Funktion im hellenistischen Raum,” 44–55).

citadel of Susa (and thus its palace) or whether it stood for the city as a whole (synecdoche). In Esth 1:2, the king sits on his royal throne 'in Susa, the *bīrā*' בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה. There, at least, it is closely associated with the king and his palace (see also Neh 1:1). In Ezra 6:2, Ecbatana is called the בִּירְתָא of the province of Media, and in extrabiblical texts the same term is used to denote the city or citadel of Samaria or the fortress of Elephantine.² In any event, בִּירָה is not a term used for or meant to recall the monarchic palace, or even the monarchic city of Jerusalem; it served to recall the temple, at least in Chronicles.

The term הֵיכָל, although at times referring also to the temple (the palace of 'the [heavenly] King'; e.g., 2 Kgs 18:16; 23:4; cf. 1 Sam 1:9), often denotes the palace of a human king (e.g., 1 Kgs 21:1; 2 Kgs 20:18; 39:7; Dan 1:4). From the perspective of the construction of memory in Persian time about a monarchic הֵיכָל, the most significant text is Ps 45:16, in which images of a past and possibly a future הֵיכָל are evoked. This said, nothing about the material, architectural features of the place is recalled. In fact, it is recalled far more as a mythological space than a "historical" building.

In another Psalm, Ps 48:14, the audience is asked to pay attention to Zion's outer wall and observe carefully her אֲרָמְנוֹת, so that they may 'tell' (סַפֵּר Piel) the future generation that this is 'Elohim, their God, 'forever' עוֹלָם וָעֶד. Structures in Jerusalem that connote palatial meanings and that date to the time of the kingdom should thus be remembered from generation to generation. The purpose is obviously that the succeeding generations may recall God's steadfast love. The psalm presents Jerusalem as a structure of citadels or towers surrounded by walls, but the only king residing here, now, is God.³

Forgetting and Remembering the Palace

But what does it mean to סַפֵּר 'tell' or to make the next generation remember a palatial edifice or structure and to understand its meaning? How is the monarchic palace of Jerusalem remembered in the Persian period?

The royal palace, along with the majority of palaces from the monarchic period lay in ruins in the Achaemenid era. A גִּן-הַמֶּלֶךְ 'royal garden' is attested in Neh 3:15 but is used to locate the repair-work on part of the city-wall. Neh 3:25 is even more specific. It reports the repair done on the wall and probably the 'tower' מִגְדָּל that went out מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ הָעֶלְיוֹן 'from the upper palace' אֲשֶׁר לְחֹצֵר הַמִּשְׁטָה 'belonging to the court of the guard'. A מִגְדָּל is a common term for a specific structure in the palace. In this context, it is likely to refer to

2. André Lemaire and Hélène Lozachmeur, "Bīrāh/Birtā' en Arameen," *Syria* 64 (1987) 261–66. I thank Diana Edelman for making me aware of this article and for fruitful suggestions about my subject.

3. For a brief exegesis of the psalm, see Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007) 736–37.

the ruins of a preexilic palace, probably the royal palace. Clearly, the tower is not to be associated with the residence of the governor, as there is no indication that the governor's palace was called *בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ*.⁴ Nor is this tower related to the possible citadel or fort (*בִּירָה*) that is mentioned in connection with the building of the Persian wall (Neh 2:8; 7:2).

In other words, the ruins of the monarchical palace were still regarded as a reference point in Jerusalem more than 150 years after its destruction, or even in the Hasmonean era, if Finkelstein's dating of the text is correct.⁵

At the same time, one may note that although there seem to have been pilgrimages or gatherings in Jerusalem after the rebuilding of the Second Temple, there is no specific remembrance of the palace in these pilgrimage feasts.⁶ The pilgrimage Psalms 120–34 take no notice of it, even if Ps 122:7 mentions the city wall and its *אַרְמְנוֹת*, like Psalm 48. The only exception might be Ps 122:5, which speaks about the *כְּסֵאוֹת לְבֵית דָּוִיד* 'the thrones of the house of David', which also are the thrones *לְמִשְׁפָּט* 'for judgment'. But this sounds rather abstract and general, with seemingly no specific reference to the palace ruins as a structure. It is also significant that Ezra 4 and 5, which report the opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, refer to the city wall and the temple but never to the palace (for instance, Ezra 5:8). Even the recollection of the burning of Jerusalem refers only to the temple, not to the palace (5:12). Whereas Ezra 5:15 reports that King Cyrus told them to let the temple be rebuilt *עַל-אַתְרָהּ* 'on its

4. The expression *לְכֶסֶא* in 3:7 may refer to the governor's residence in Mizpah; this need not imply that the governor himself had a palace in Jerusalem. For this issue, see Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple* (BibleWorld; London: Equinox, 2005) 212–14; see also pp. 146 and 344–46.

5. Israel Finkelstein, "Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah," *JSOT* 32 (2008) 501–20; and idem, "Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder," *JHS* 9/24 (2009). On-line: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_126.pdf. More recently, see Israel Finkelstein, Ido Koch, and Oded Lipschits, "The Mound on the Mount: A Possible Solution to the 'Problem with Jerusalem,'" *JHS* 11/12 (2011). On-line: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_159.pdf; and the extensive references to works dealing with the construction of the wall and the date of the list in Nehemiah 3. For other positions on the matter of the wall, see, for instance, Eilat Mazar, "The Wall that Nehemiah Built," *BAR* 35/2 (2009) 24–33, 66; and David Ussishkin, "The Borders and *De Facto* Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 147–66; and the bibliography cited in these works. As Othmar Keel states: "Keiner der Statthalter Jehuds hat den Status eines Vasallenkönigs gehabt," even when Yehud was a satrapy of its own. See Keel, *Geschichte Jerusalems*, 970.

6. For a survey of pilgrimages in the Persian era, see Melody D. Knowles, "Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Persian Period," in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period* (ed. Jon L. Berquist; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007) 7–24.

site', thus implying that the place of the temple in ruins was (at least imagined) as a major "material site of memory" of the temple, there is nothing in the texts that makes the ruins of the palace a site of memory. It is just a simple reference point for the localization of the works on the wall.

To be sure, the community in Jerusalem must have had vivid pictures of palaces, even if they were not a king's residence. According to O. Lipschits and others, the palace in Ramat Raḥel must have been an active and very important administrative tax collection center during the Persian period.⁷ Another important structure was the public residency at Lachish. But still, there was barely any interest in the old, monarchic palace of Jerusalem as a site of material memory.

The lack of references to the palace in the building reports in Chronicles supports this position, and the discussion above suggests that in the texts of the community, the temple (past, present, and future) drew all the attention and the royal palace was, mainly, ignored. But at the same time, the reports about the larger size of the Solomonic palace vs. the temple and about the time that Solomon invested in building each of them (construction of the palace lasted 13 years; the temple was built in only 7 years; see 1 Kgs 6:38; 7:1) demand some discussion. It is often maintained that either the texts conveyed a critique of Solomon or that the tradition about the building of the (Solomonic) palace must be very old and reflects a time when the palace was more important than the temple. But, the first explanation runs into the problem that the Solomon of 1 Kgs 6 and 7 is and must be a positive character, because he builds the temple.

The idea that the original tradition witnessed the temple as a *Palastkirche* while the succeeding literary tradition of the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler reduced the importance of the palace successively to almost nothing runs into another problem. It is true that it is usually assumed that through redactional processes even traditions about the building of the palace were largely overshadowed and outnumbered by those associated with the temple. O. Keel goes even so far as to claim that "das Wissen um den Palast ist soweit verloren gegangen, dass man um die Zeitenwende nicht einmal mehr wusste, wo der Königspalast gestanden hatte und man ihn auf dem SW-Hügel vermutete."⁸ ("Knowledge of the palace was lost to the extent that, with the passage of time, one did not even know the location of the king's palace anymore, assuming that it was on the southwest hill.")⁹ The final remark in the citation refers to the change in localization of the name Zion from the southeast to the southwest side of the City of David.)⁹ But Keel's redaction-historical model would make sense only if the tradition about a great palace goes back to the time of Solo-

7. Oded Lipschits et al., "Unraveling the Riddles of Ramat Raḥel," *NEA* 4/1 (2011) 36.

8. Keel, *Geschichte Jerusalems*, 247.

9. *Ibid.*, 62.

mon, which, indeed, is his personal view. However, there seems to be a widely shared (but not universal) scholarly consensus that the large “Solomonic palace” described in Kings could not have been established before the late 700s B.C.E., when Jerusalem grew from a small, local town into a larger, fortified city. Thus, unsurprisingly, redaction-critical historians—such as R. Kratz and T. Römer—suggest a Neo-Assyrian origin in date, if not later, for the two building accounts of the temple and the palace in the book of Kings.¹⁰ But the span of time between the proposed date of the account of the building of the palace reflected in the book of Kings and the date of the composition of that book, which clearly privileges the temple over the palace, seems to me too short to allow for such a sharp change. Cultural memory of such a grand palace would certainly survive for about 200 years, especially if the structures were still standing for most of this time.

But perhaps the comprehensive picture of the Solomonic palace and court exaggerated the buildings even of the 8th and 7th centuries, in fact, of all possible monarchic centuries.¹¹ It is plausible to imagine the portrayal of the great palace of Solomon as emerging out of a “free-floating” imagination of a past Golden Era.

In any event, the report about the building of the great Solomonic palace was not removed from the Deuteronomistic History. Although the Chronicler omits the description of the palace found in 1 Kings 7 and 10 from his expanded account of the building of the temple in 2 Chronicles 1–7, he includes two brief references to the building of the palace in 2 Chr 2:1 and 8:1 in new settings not taken over directly from Kings. It is significant, however, that this

10. See Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testament* (Uni-Taschenbücher 2157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 167. Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 99. See also Clifford M. McCormick, *Palace and Temple: A Study of Architectural and Verbal Icons* (BZAW 313; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002). This more specialized study finds the background for Solomon’s palace in Sennacherib’s palace.

11. Even Amihai Mazar, in a discussion with Israel Finkelstein about the existence of a United Kingdom with its residence in Jerusalem, admits that the description of the temple-palace compound of Solomon reflects, and even exaggerates, the buildings of the 8th and 7th centuries. See the discussions in Brian B. Schmidt, ed., *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007) 129. For a late dating of the temple-palace structures in Jerusalem, see Israel Finkelstein in the same volume, and Ernst A. Knauf, “Le roi est mort, vive le roi!” in *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium* (ed. Lowell K. Handy; Leiden/N.Y./Köln: Brill, 1997) 81–95. See also the different positions of Lawrence Stager, Amihai Mazar, and Israel Finkelstein in William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin, eds., *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestine* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003).

interest is connected only to the palace of the founding kings, David and Solomon, not to the palace ruins. To address why this is the case, I will turn to another theory of remembrance.

Before I do so, I would like to stress that the common and historically accurate close relationship between temple and palace is strongly criticized in Ezek 43:8, which blames some of the temple's misfortune on its proximity to the structure of the palace, because evil kings have polluted the temple. Implicitly, according to Ezekiel, the future of the temple lies in its physical separation from the palace; accordingly, the palace is given no place in Ezekiel's view of the future. In fact, in Ezekiel, the common word for palace, בַּיִת 'house', is never used to describe the palace (for instance, הַמֶּלֶךְ); it always refers to the temple. The same holds for the word *hēkāl* (הֵיכָל). The palace is certainly there in the texts, but it is not connected with the ruins and not about to be rebuilt, in its original place or anywhere.

This focus on the temple and the city walls but not on the palace or on its ruins in the "reuse" of Jerusalem in the Persian period is significant. Because one should assume that there were ruins of the palace and that the population knew where the palace used to be in the past, "forgetting" about both should lead to some reflection from both a methodological and a historical or social-scientific point of view beyond the obvious point that there was no human king who reigned over Judah from Jerusalem in the Persian period.

In fact, M. Prent has demonstrated how a number of visible ruins of Minoan Bronze Age palaces in Crete were reused as sites for cultic activity in the Iron Age.¹² The "palatial ruins sanctuaries" were deliberately chosen by the local elite and played a key role in the formation of the regional aristocratic and religious identities. L. Meskell has documented the same phenomenon in Egypt.¹³ Moreover, we are talking about a time span of several hundred years in these two other cultures, while in Persian-era Jerusalem, the ruins had only existed for some three or four generations (if we refer to Nehemiah's text).

Because even such a generational span exceeds what we could call personal or short-term commemoration and should be regarded as long-term social memory, the question is the reason for a lack of mnemonic activity connected to the ruins of the palace, and the palace as a whole, in Jerusalem. Was this a case of active forgetting? If the original temple-palace tradition presented the temple only as a *Palastkirche*, there must have been some political or religious reason for the selection of this *Palastkirche* rather than the palace proper as the literati's official "material site of memory" in Jerusalem. In a couple of essays

12. Mieke Prent, "Glories of the Past in the Past: Ritual Activities at Palatial Ruins in Early Iron Age Crete," in *Archaeologies of Memory* (ed. Ruth M. Van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock; Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) 81–103.

13. Lynn Meskell, "Memory's Materiality: Ancestral Presence, Commemorative Practice and Disjunctive Locales," in *Archaeologies of Memory* (ed. Ruth M. van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock; Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) 34–55.

about memories of Jerusalem, E. Ben Zvi finds the underlying ideology to lie in the utopian idea of Jerusalem as sacred space and in the temple's association with rest, not with military victory.¹⁴ This corresponds to Psalm 122; but why did this idea come about?

"Free-Floating" Ideas of the Palace?

Let me first turn to the methodological issue. Were the palatial ruins in Jerusalem a (material) site of memory? If we follow P. Nora, they were not. He claims a material site becomes a site of memory only if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura.¹⁵ Sites of memory originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory; these sites either have to be physically built or invested with symbolic value. The palatial ruins in the time of the book of Nehemiah had evidently lost their pedagogical authority to transmit values. As already noted, the word ספר 'tell', which is connected to the walls and the אֶרְמֹנֹת of Jerusalem in Psalm 48, is not applied to the palatial ruins.

Memory is affective and magical. In his discussion of memory, H.-G. Gadamer combines memory with the concepts of *Bildung*, the otherness of the past, and the difference of the past in relation to the present.¹⁶ The concept of *Bildung* corresponds to Heidegger's notion of *Befindlichkeit*.¹⁷ This term also affects the distinctions of past/present/future. It is clear that the text of Ps 48:14 desires not only that factual information be conveyed to the succeeding generation but also some kind of feelings, atmosphere, mood, or *Befindlichkeit*. Walking through the palace of Vienna or through the palace ruins of Persepolis evokes some kind of feelings. It can be a sense of belonging, of common identity or nostalgia, or even of utopia.

This was obviously the case insofar as it concerns the ruins of the temple in Jerusalem; otherwise, no Second Temple would have been built on the site. Ezra 3:12 relates that many of the old people who had seen אֶת־הַבַּיִת הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּיָסְדוֹ 'the first temple on its foundations' wept when they saw the new temple. The verb יסד indicates that this place, the ground on which the new temple stands, was a material site of memory. In contrast, there seems to be no such *Bildung*, *Befindlichkeit*, or feelings attached to the ruin of the royal palace, or if there were, it has been suppressed by the biblical literati.

14. Ehud Ben Zvi, "Remembering Pre-Israelite Jerusalem in Late Persian Yehud: Mnemonic Preferences, Memories and Social Imagination," in *Urban Dreams and Realities: The City in Ancient Cultures* (ed. Adam Kemezis; forthcoming).

15. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26, special issue: *Memory and Counter-Memory* (1989) 7–24 (p. 19).

16. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1985) 16.

17. For a brief summary of his argument, see Eugene T. Gendlin, "Beindlichkeit: Heidegger and the Philosophy of Psychology," in *Heidegger and Psychology: A Special Issue from the Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* (ed. Keith Hoeller; 1988) 43–49.

But what about the palace? Ps 45:16 and Psalm 45 as a whole shape some kind of feelings, atmosphere, mood, or *Befindlichkeit*, but it does not necessarily recall any material ruins or feature of the building itself. It shapes a mythological place. The building account in 1 Kgs 7:1–12 of the palace in Jerusalem, however, draws much attention to a building structure. The latter has been compared to the ceremonial palace of the so-called *bit-hilani* type, especially the structure in Zinçirli with its living quarters, and alleged parallels have been suggested to the winter house (Jer 36:22) and the cedar wood cover (1 Kgs 6:15). The throne in 1 Kgs 10:18–20 is often paralleled with thrones such as the 13th-century example found in Megiddo or the throne on the sarcophagus of Ahiiram of Byblos.¹⁸ A similar Phoenician throne was also found in Salamis, Cyprus. The “house of the forest of Lebanon” presents a special problem.¹⁹ D. Ussishkin traces this structure back to the royal citadel in Alti-nepe in the kingdom of Urartu, dating from the 8th or 7th century B.C.E., which may have been used as a royal reception hall. We ought to remember that the kings of Persia also adopted structural forms and art from Urartu.²⁰ Whose reality might underlie the biblical description, if it is grounded on something actual and not based on literary templates and imagination? More recently, other scholars have linked the biblical “house of the forest of Lebanon” with Assyria.²¹

It seems clear, however, that there is some kind of common, international standard underlying the description. The account of the court life of Solomon has some kind of mythic or utopian character. According to archaeologists, the palaces of the Palestinian area participated in the larger, international *koine* of palatial design and structure. For instance, the Late Bronze Age palace complex in the Upper City of Hazor shared common architectural elements with the *bit-hilani*-type palaces of northern Syria and Anatolia.²² V. Fritz has listed six buildings he regards as examples of a special type of palace that first ap-

18. David Ussishkin, “King Solomon’s Palaces,” *BA* 36/3 (1973) 78–105. See also the brief remark by Mazar in Schmidt, *Quest for Historical Israel*, 129.

19. One should note, however, that the King of Mesha lists “the wall of the forest” as one of the structures in his city-building projects, which include the citadel, towers, and his house; see *KAI* 181, line 21. Was there any idea of a forest connected to the palace? There were, at least, lions’ gardens, where lions were kept for the king’s hunt.

20. Roman Ghirshman, *Persia: From the Origins to Alexander the Great* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964) 131, 215.

21. E.g., Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings. A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 72.

22. Ruhama Bonfil and Anabel Zarzecki-Peleg, “The Palace in the Upper City of Hazor as an Expression of a Syrian Architectural Paradigm,” *BASOR* 348 (2007) 25–47. Scholars have suggested that the “Nordburg” of Megiddo (MB IIA) has some characteristics in common with Syro-Palestinian palaces; see Lorenzo Nigro, “The ‘Nordburg’ of Megiddo: A New Reconstruction on the Basis of Schumacher’s Plan,” *BASOR* 293 (1994) 15–29.

pears in Palestine during Assyrian hegemony in the region and continues into the Persian period.²³ He tracks this type to a Mesopotamian (Assyrian and Babylonian) origin.

Moving now to the east, the palaces and temple of Nebuchadnezzar II in Babylon show similarities with the layout of Assyrian palaces and were staffed by people from, for instance, Egypt, Tyre, Elam, Lydia, and Persia.²⁴ The comprehensive picture indicates that the memories of the palace of Solomon, and even of succeeding kings in Jerusalem, are “free-floating,” not linked to the ruins of Nehemiah’s time as a site of memory. This should come as no surprise. From the later Greco-Roman era we have detailed descriptions of palaces at sites where no palace ever existed. By participating in an international, “hybrid” elite culture, however, these biblical memories give significance to the place of Jerusalem, providing the city a discourse or identity. How can we explain this?

According to the French philosopher M. de Certeau, “memory derives its interventionary force from its very capacity to be altered-unmoored, mobile, lacking any fixed position.”²⁵ Memory can, according to de Certeau, “settle down” as something alien to the place it settles down: “Like those birds that lay their eggs only in other species’ nests, memory produces in a place that does not belong to it.” Typical to memory is its mobilization and its alteration.

De Certeau refers to the relations between spatial and signifying practices. He speaks about “names that detach themselves from the places they were supposed to define and serve as imaginary meeting-points on itineraries,” and of a name “that is detached from actual places and flies high over the city like a foggy geography of ‘meanings’ held in suspension.”²⁶ As an example, he refers to Place de la Concorde, whose name is an idea or even more, a name with magical power that cannot be accounted for in a simple way. These names, he says,

become liberated spaces that can be occupied. A rich indetermination gives them, by means of a semantic rarefaction, the function of articulating a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning.²⁷

23. Volkmar Fritz, “Die Paläste während der assyrischen, babylonischen und persischen Vorherrschaft in Palästina,” *MDOG* 111 (1979) 63–74.

24. See Amélie Kuhrt, “The Palace(s) of Babylon,” in *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (ed. Inge Nielsen; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2001) 77–94. See also Nielsen, *Hellenistic Palaces*, 44–46. This work discusses the international background and models of the Achaemenid palaces (especially the palace in Susa).

25. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (trans. Steven Rendall; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 86.

26. *Ibid.*, 104.

27. *Ibid.*

De Certeau talks about a strange toponymy, which is a form of declaring: “I fill this great empty space with a beautiful name.”²⁸ It is, as far as it is related to the city, a discourse on the city that “eludes urbanistic systematicity,” he says.²⁹ The naming of this kind creates a void, makes room for a void, it “authorizes” the production of an area of free play.

I think this is significant for the memory-making of the palaces of David and Solomon. “The palace of Jerusalem” in this meaning detaches itself from the place it is supposed to define and serves as an “imaginary meeting-point on itineraries,” to express it in de Certeau’s words (cf. Ps 45). This is why one can continue to speak of those palaces in the Persian period and later, without any need to attach it to the ruins or even the rebuilt palimpsests of the palace structures in Jerusalem.

To be sure, material sites of memory can definitely be regarded as nodes for remembrance of the past. P. Nora states that there is an embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. In an article about the memory of Jerusalem, Ben Zvi holds that sites of memory, material or not, including cities and ruins, may serve as “ciphers” that activate and communicate various mnemonic worlds by evoking a sense of order, mythical images, and memories and even by creating hope and utopia.³⁰ He emphasizes in particular the role of sites of memory in creating a sense of *continuity*.³¹ This is, he says, an important reason for building the Second Temple in the small and insignificant town of Jerusalem in the Persian era. The basic mnemonic structure or narrative that he finds for both the temple and for Jerusalem is “from temple to temple” and “from past David to future David.” David, when linked to Jerusalem, is the pious builder-king, at least in Chronicles.³²

However, I will contend that the first impression of a ruin is that of the “otherness” of the past more than continuity.³³ Again, I refer to the notice that those who had seen the first temple on its site (foundation) wept when they saw the second one on the same site. They saw distance and otherness. I think this is especially the case with the Jerusalemite palace and other biblical palatial structures that were in ruins. It is the importance of the “otherness” that I will use in my concluding interpretation of the relationship between the ruins and the texts. But before returning to that, I will touch on another issue of method.

We need to figure out what impact the presence of ruins makes on the memory of palaces presented in the texts of the Persian community. The palace of

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 105.

30. See Ehud Ben Zvi, “Exploring Jerusalem as a Site of Memory in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Period,” pp. 197–217 in this volume.

31. This is also one of the issues he pursues in “Remembering Pre-Israelite Jerusalem in Late Persian Yehud.”

32. Idem, “Exploring Jerusalem.”

33. The term refers to Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 17.

Jerusalem was never rebuilt like the temple, and is not imagined when thinking of a utopian future. The closest to this are statements such as Amos 9:11: in the future, YHWH will raise up David's fallen *הֹחַ* 'hut'; but typically, the verse stresses the restoration of the wall and the ruined cities, and then it focuses on agriculture. However, when we turn to constructions of the past, and because a study of the memory of palaces in the Persian era should be understood as the cumulative reading of all the texts available to the Persian literati and possibly their audience,³⁴ we cannot forget the references in Samuel and Kings.

The German historian and philosopher R. Koselleck, whose main scholarly work was the editing of the massive dictionary *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, states about memory of the past that

experience based on the past is spatial since it is assembled into a totality, within which many layers of earlier times are simultaneously present, without, however, providing any indication of the before and after. There is no experience that might be chronologically calibrated—though datable by occasion, of course, since at any one time it is composed of what can be recalled by one's memory and by the knowledge of others' lives. Chronologically, all experience leaps over time; experience does not create continuity in the sense of an additive preparation of the past.³⁵

I want to link memory to his concept of experience, which is "presence-centeredness." On the other hand, he says that *Geschichte*, or *Historie*, is characterized by *Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeitigen* 'the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous'; it is a consciousness of a diversity of temporal strata and sequence of time.³⁶

So, this is what basically distinguishes redaction criticism from studies of the biblical texts from a memory perspective.³⁷ However, there is still a sense of time in memory; the ruins of the palace point to a time that is *irrevocably past*.³⁸

34. This also corresponds to the approach Ehud Ben Zvi's uses to memory studies; he does not seem to make any chronological distinction within the texts that create the memories of a specific group. This is especially clear in Ben Zvi, "Remembering Pre-Israelite Jerusalem in Late Persian Yehud." From his reading of Chronicles, he states that there was a tendency in Yehudite social memory not to remember some foundational characters, like Abraham, Moses, or, in David's case, his role as a warrior, which is strongly downplayed.

35. Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985) 273.

36. *Ibid.*, 94.

37. See also, for instance, Ben Zvi, "Remembering Pre-Israelite Jerusalem in Late Persian Yehud," 8. In this study, he indicates that temporality may be less important than symbolic and mnemonic meanings.

38. This is the point made by P. Nora ("Between Memory and History").

*The Disappearance of the Palace:
Adjustment to the Persian Rule?*

In the texts of the community, the royal palace was recalled with mainly positive connotations in connection to David and Solomon, but not thereafter. The palace in Jerusalem or Samaria is mentioned on numerous other occasions when enemies invade the city and the foreign king carries off the treasure in the temple and the palace. The attack on Jerusalem by the Egyptian king Shishaq in 1 Kgs 14:26 / 2 Chr 12:9 is Rehoboam's punishment for his sins. In 1 Kgs 15:18, Asa gives up the treasure to the king in Damascus; in 1 Kgs 20:6, Ahab of Samaria pays off Ben-Hadad of Damascus. In 2 Kgs 12:18, it is Jerusalem and king Hazael of Aram; in 14:14, it is the king of Israel attacking Jerusalem; and 16:8 tells how King Ahaz took the treasure from the royal palace and sent it to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, as a sign of vassalship; see also 18:15, 20:13, and 24:13. Finally, 2 Kgs 25:9 is about the burning of the temple and the palace.

A royal palace is recalled as a place of assassinations and killings. In 1 Kgs 16:18–19, the usurper Zimri goes to the *צֶמֶן* of the palace and burns down the palace over himself and dies because of his sins and evildoings. In 2 Kgs 11:5, 16, Athalyah is killed in the palace; she should not be put to death in the temple but is killed as she reaches the road where the horses enter the palace. After this, the infant king is taken through the gate of the guards and placed on the throne. In a number of cases, those who are *עַל-הַכִּיֹּחַ* (see also 1 Kgs 16:18) revolt against the king (2 Kgs 10:5, 15:25, and 21:33).

Finally, the palace is mentioned in other negative contexts. It attracts negative connotations in the story about David and Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11. We read about the leprous king Uzziah living in a separate "house" or "palace" in 2 Kgs 15:5. Then, in 2 Kgs 23:12, we learn about the altars Judahite kings had built on the roof of the palace; that is, in or on the roof-chamber of King Ahaz. Josiah pulled them down. According to Jer 19:13, the palace roof had been the site used to make smoke offerings to the *צֶבֶא הַשָּׁמַיִם* 'host of heaven' and to pour out libations for other gods. The upper room of the palace appears also in Judg 3:20, where King Eglon is killed; there is a lot about fat and dirt in this notice! The palace might be where the women whose son was resuscitated by Elisha was to have appealed to the king for the return of her lands at the end of seven years of hardship, if not the city gate (2 Kgs 8:3). The palace is possibly mentioned, among other places, in 2 Kgs 20:13, but the context is not positive.

It is noteworthy that the palace is never mentioned directly in the account of the reign of King Josiah, one of the three most positively rated monarchs in the book of Kings. In 2 Kgs 23:2 the king implicitly leaves the palace to go to the temple, which, in contrast, plays an active role in the narrative.

The book of Jeremiah exhibits also a generally negative attitude toward palaces and kings; they are unclean (Jer 19:13, 22:1), and the author condemns

the building of large ballrooms (Jer 22:14–15; see also Jer 33:4). Its vision of a positive future, which is linked with the throne in Jerusalem, is expressed in very abstract or general terms and is never related to the palace (see, for instance, in 3:17). Returning to explicitly negative associations, Jeremiah is imprisoned in the court of the guard inside the palace (Jer 32:2; only mentioned in Jeremiah 32–34 and Neh 3:25), and the prediction that the treasure of the palace will be taken to Babylon (Jer 27:18) is realized in 39:8, along with the women of the palace (Jer 38:22). This is a well-known Deuteronomistic topos. Most informative about the palace and its structures is the episode where the king rejects Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 26 and 36); it paints an entirely negative picture of the king in the palace.

Jeremiah and his messenger Baruch address the people in 'the court of the temple of YHWH' בְּחֻצֵּי בֵּית יְהוָה (26:2, 36:6). The priest, the prophets, and all the people who come to worship listen. Then the שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה 'officials of Judah' who seemed to be the officials of the palace because they were gathered there, went up to the temple (v. 10). In Jeremiah 26, these officials and all the people stand against the priests and the prophets, who want to kill Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 36, Baruch reads the scroll from the chamber of the scribe Gemariah, in the upper court, in a gate of the temple. Gemariah's son goes down to the palace, into the chamber of the king's scribe, where all the officials are sitting, including another scribe. They call for Baruch, and having heard the message, they are alarmed. Again, they protect Jeremiah's messenger; another servant in the palace reads the scroll for the king, who burns it piece by piece, sitting at the fire in his winter house. The use of braziers is known from other palace excavations. So, the same picture appears here: the officials are not unfriendly toward Jeremiah, but the priest, the prophets, and the king himself are hostile. These two are the only chapters, as far as I can see, that present the officials linked to the palace in a positive light in their attitude toward Jeremiah; see also 38:7, which talks about a סָרִיס 'high official' who is 'in the king's palace', בְּבֵית הַמֶּלֶךְ.

In the north, the palace is also negatively presented. While the term הֵיכָל 'large house or palace' refers to the temple or to YHWH's heavenly palace in an overwhelming number of cases, there are a few exceptions, including King Ahab, who had a הֵיכָל in Jezreel, beside Naboth's vineyard. Not surprisingly, both he and his wife had built temples and altars for foreign gods, which taints their palace by association. The term is used also in relation to the palace of the king of Babylon in 2 Kgs 20:18; Isa 39:7; Dan 1:4, 4:1; Ezra 4:14; and 2 Chr 36:7.³⁹

In the biblical tradition, palaces are problematic places. Beyond the foundational royal figures, David and Solomon, palaces are not to be remembered

39. This reference does not have any parallel in Kings. It is clear from v. 19 that this is significant; this verse speaks of the אֶרְמֹנֹת together with the house of God and the wall in Jerusalem.

much and even in cases of figures of exemplary kings such as Josiah or Hezekiah, it is better to imagine them as little as possible in association with the palace (and see 2 Kgs 20:13).

How might we interpret these findings? One explanation would involve the idea of monarchic royal sin (cf. Sir 49:4). Another may involve the idea that the only real “large house” belongs to the Persian kings. The presentation of the temple in Jerusalem as a *הֵיכָל* for the heavenly king in the Golden Age of Solomon represented no challenge to the Persians’ authority from a political perspective but allowed a form of ideological resistance.

*A Complementary Option: “After the Collapse”:
Rebuilding and Post-colonial Theory*

The notion of state collapse and regeneration is particularly helpful to understand the political status of Yehud and in turn for matters of the memories that emerge out of this context. Recently, G. M. Schwartz has defined “collapse” as the fragmentation of states into smaller political entities; the partial abandonment or complete desertion of urban centers along with the loss or depletion of their centralizing functions; the breakdown of regional economic systems; and the failure of civilizational ideologies. However, as he notes, collapse is never total or complete. Rather, as S. Eisenstadt and N. Yoffee have asserted, collapse should be viewed as part of the continuous process of boundary reconstruction.⁴⁰

A number of theoretical and practical cultural memory studies, first and foremost the seminal work by P. Nora, focus on the relation between “sites of memory” and the populace, particularly in times of seemingly challenging change, for instance, how monumental buildings and ruins, or events such as the Tour de France, create a link to the perceived “French past.” Nora, who builds on four types of memory or *lieux de memoire*, adds an underlying fifth that he calls *memoire patrimonie*, which gives coherence to the other four types: this is the transformation into common property, into a collective heritage. Thus, the term *memory* includes an aspect that regards how something can become common property. One could say, perhaps, that this “the sense of

40. Glenn M. Schwartz, “From Collapse to Regeneration” in *After Collapse: The Regeneration of Complex Societies* (ed. Glenn M. Schwartz and John J. Nichols; Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006) 3–17 (pp. 5–6). Alan Kolata, in the same book, admittedly with a background in the Andes region, points to “ordinary peoples’ prevailing attitudes, perceptions, and practices played out in the course of their everyday life, not simply political and economic institutions” as an analytically critical variable in the understanding of how societies regenerate after collapse (“Before and After Collapse: Reflections on the Regeneration of Social Complexity,” 208–21 [p. 211]). This fits with at least one notion of “cultural memory.”

Frenchness” in the populace is a precondition for regarding selected sites as common property. It is how the sites of memory *democratize* the remembrance of the past, which is the central focus of Nora. Clearly, at least some of the sites are created or arranged by the elites, but that is not what interests Nora. So, following this line of thought, I would regard the quest for “the cultural memory of the palace” as a quest for the relation between textual utterances about the palace and the populace; or, to be more specific, as a quest for the effect of the memory of the palace on everyday practices of ordinary people, particularly in times perceived to reflect discontinuity.

A. Kolata points to the importance of the “time-binding” material and social effects of the specific political ecology of the state prior to its disintegration; that is, the historical continuities between pre- and post-collapse social formations. In the case of regeneration through a colonizing state or empire, he also notices that

in a kind of society-wide “Stockholm syndrome,” subject populations often move their perception of newly dominant authorities from fear and loathing to identification, collaboration, and emulation. . . . In short, historical consciousness may be so thoroughly transformed that the dominated and the dominators come to broadly share the new ideology of social relations and governance.⁴¹

Following Kolata, we should expect that the empire-deployed hegemony in Yehud is exercised by what he calls “orthodoxy,” which is “circumstances under which subject populations adopt and practice state ideology that serves to bind them closely to dominant patterns of behavior prescribed and sanctioned by state authorities.”⁴² He also holds that one would expect these practices of hegemony to be tied to temples, palaces, and marketplaces. Now, as mentioned above, excavated buildings that have been interpreted as palaces in Palestine show a number of features that link them to an international cultural koine for palatial layout. It is clear that the splendor of the court of Solomon as described in the biblical texts did not give rise to the imperial palaces built subsequently in the East! So, I am inclined to think that Kolata’s description provides a good model for understanding the social-psychological reason for the development and acceptance of memories about Solomon as royal builder. It reflects some kind of accommodation to imperial hegemony.⁴³ One way of expressing this nationalistic pride and utopia was through the temple and, particularly, the future utopian temple; another was through a former, imperial Solomon, and thus his palace. Memories about this palace, even if overwhelmed by those of past

41. Kolata, “Before and After Collapse,” 211.

42. *Ibid.*, 212.

43. This is also something that has been stressed by Daniel Smith in his study of deported peoples (*The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* [Bloomington, IN: Meyer-Stone, 1989]).

and future temples, served an important role, and the same holds true for the tendency to forget about non-Solomonic, negative palaces or, alternatively, to portray them in terms that would not impinge at all on the unique memory of Solomon's palace.

City Gardens and Parks in Biblical Social Memory

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Introduction

Farmsteads and agricultural estates became characteristic of rural settlement patterns the Judean hills in the Iron II period and onward, where every free man who owned property could attain the ideal of living under his own fig tree and grapevine (Mic 4:4; 2 Kgs 18:31; Amos 9:14 reversing the divine destruction of gardens in 4:9). Gardens as cultivated spaces to grow vegetables, fruit, medicinal plants, spices, or flowers have been a part of human enterprise in the ancient Near East, including the southern Levant, for millennia.¹ Were

Author's note: I wish to thank the following colleagues for their helpful feedback: Nick Wyatt, Carey Walsh, Terje Stordalen, Philip Davies, and Ehud Ben Zvi.

1. Studies of actual gardens in the ancient Near East, usually royal, are becoming more numerous. A small selection is included here. For a royal garden at Ebla in the Middle Bronze II period, see Paolo Xella, “Gunu(m)^(ki) dans les textes d’Ebla,” *NABU* 89 (1995) 80–81; and Paolo Matthiae, “Princely Cemetery and Ancestor Cult at Ebla during the Middle Bronze II: A Proposal of Interpretation,” *UF* 11 (1979) 563–69. For a royal garden at Ugarit in the 15th century B.C.E., see, for example, Claude F. A. Schaeffer, “Un jardin dans le palais d’Ugarit,” in *Ugaritica IV* (ed. Claude F. A. Schaeffer; Mission de Ras Shamra 15; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale et Geuthner, 1962) 15–25 and Ksenia Starodoub-Scharr, “The Royal Garden in the Great Royal Palace of Ugarit: To the Interpretation of the Sacred Aspect of the Royalty in Ancient Palestine and Syria,” in *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Bible and Its World* (ed. Ron Margolin; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1999) 253*–68*. For the Perisan-era garden at Ramat Raḥel just south of Jerusalem, see staff, “Ancient Biblical Gardens Bloom Again,” *LiveScience* (February 18, 2012). On-line: <http://www.livescience.com/18554-ancient-biblical-gardens-bloom.html>; and Dafna Langgut et al., “Fossil Pollen Reveals the Secrets of the Royal Persian Garden at Ramat Raḥel, Jerusalem,” *Palynology* 37 (2013) 115–29.

For Assyrian and Babylonian gardens see, e.g., A. Leo Oppenheim, “On Royal Gardens in Mesopotamia,” *JNES* 24 (1965) 328–33; Jean-Jacques Glassner, “À propos des jardins mésopotamiens,” in *Jardins d’Orient* (ed. Rika Gyselen; Res orientales 3; Leuven: Peeters, 1991); Stephanie Dalley, “The Hanging Gardens of Babylon at Nineveh,” in *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten: XXXIXe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*

gardens also remembered as being an integral element in urban planning and habitation, used for food production, as status symbols, or for personal relaxation? What associations do gardens that are remembered in the Hebrew Bible to have been located in or near cities evoke among readers or hearers of the collection of books?

While the texts recall that the enslaved Israelites tended irrigated vegetable gardens while they sojourned in Egypt (Deut 11:10) and that people remaining in Judah after the first Babylonian deportations should rebuild houses and plant food-producing gardens (Jer 29:5, 28),² almost all the references to gardens, parks, and orchards involve royal (e.g., 2 Kgs 21:18; 25:4; Jer 39:4; 52:7) or

Heidelberg 6.–10. Juli 1992 (ed. Hartmut Waetzoldt and Harald Hauptmann; Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1997) 19–24; Mirko Novák, “The Artificial Paradise: Programme and Ideology of Royal Gardens,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2–5, 2001* (ed. Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting; 2 vols.; Compte rendu, Rencontre assyriologique internationale 47/2; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002) 2:443–60; Douglas J. Green, “*I Undertook Great Works*”: *The Ideology of Domestic Achievements in West Semitic Royal Inscriptions* (FAT 2/41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Stephanie Dalley, *The Mystery of the Hanging Garden of Babylon: An Elusive World Wonder Traced* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For Persian gardens, see David Stronach, “The Royal Garden at Pasargadae: Evolution and Legacy,” in *Archaeologia Iranica et Orientalis: Miscellanea in Honorem Louis Vanden Berghe* (ed. Leon de Meyer and Ernie Haerinck; 2 vols.; Leuven: Peeters, 1989) 1:475–502; David Stronach, “Parterres and Stone Water Courses at Pasargadae: Notes on the Achaemenid Contribution to Garden Design,” *Journal of Garden History* 14/1 (1994) 3–12; Christopher Tuplin, “The Parks and Gardens of the Achaemenid Empire,” in *Achaemenid Studies* (Historia Einzelschriften 99; Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996) 80–131. For Egypt, see Jean-Claude Hugonot, *Le jardin dans l’Égypte ancienne* (Publications universitaires européennes 38, Archéologie 27; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989) and Alix Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt* (London: Rubicon, 1998). For some general studies, see Miguel Civil, “Herbs and Gardens Four Thousand Years Ago,” *The Herbarist* 28 (1962) 21–24; Donald J. Wiseman, “Palace and Temple Gardens of the Ancient Near East,” in *Monarchies and Socio-Religious Traditions in the Ancient Near East* (ed. H. I. H. Prince Takahito Mikasa; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1984) 37–43; Maureen Carroll-Spillecke, ed., *Der Garten von der Antike bis zum Mittelalter* (Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt 57; Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1992); Naomi F. Miller and Kathryn L. Gleason, *The Archaeology of Garden and Field* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Kathryn L. Gleason, “Gardens in Pre-Classical Times,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (ed. Eric M. Meyers; 5 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 2:383–85; Karen P. Foster, “The Earliest Zoos and Gardens,” *Scientific American* 281/1 (1999) 64–71; Inge Nielsen, ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC: Regional Development and Cultural Interchange between East and West* (Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens 4; Athens: Danish Institute at Athens, 2001); Maureen Carroll, *Earthly Paradises: Ancient Gardens in History and Archaeology* (London: British Museum Press, 2003).

2. Job 8:16 also appears to rely on knowledge of widely maintained, utilitarian garden plots: “The wicked thrive before the sun, and their shoots spread over the garden.”

divine gardens (e.g., Ezek 28:13, 31:8–9; and Isa 51:3). These gardens are located in or adjoining Samaria (1 Kings 21), the former capital of the kingdom of Israel, in or adjoining Jerusalem, the former capital of the kingdom of Judah (e.g., 2 Kgs 21:18, 26; Jer 39:4; 52:7; Neh 2:8; 3:15–16), in Yehud (Neh 2:8), in Susa (Esth 1:15; 7:7–8), and in Eden in association with YHWH's palace complex, either heavenly, earthly, or both (Gen 2:15). Biblical memory emphasizes YHWH's role as a protector/gardener of his chosen city, Jerusalem (e.g., Isa 31:5; 37:35; 51:3), and of the "Promised Land," which he planted, pruned, and weeded/uprooted as though it were a huge park containing cultivated garden areas adjoining his earthly palatial residence. Solomon becomes the site of memory for a past Golden Age when peace prevailed in an Israelite-ruled empire and this king created and used royal gardens (Eccl 2:5) that rivaled those associated with Cyrus the Great and Cyrus the Younger by Xenophon.³ Excavations at Pasargadae have indicated that Cyrus the Great initiated an impressive quadripartite palace garden with stone-lined irrigation channels at the first imperial Persian capital that may have been a source of emulation by subsequent Achaemenid rulers.⁴

Definitions

Before assessing the possible meanings and associations that would have been evoked by the mention of gardens in connection with cities in the minds of the biblical writers and their intended and actual audiences, it is useful to gain some sort of understanding of what constituted a garden in the thought of ancient Judahite and Judean societies, whose memories predominate in the texts. There are two terms used in the HB to describe cultivated garden-type spaces: גַּן (*gan*) / גִּנָּה (*gannâ*) and פֶּרֶדֶס (*pardēs*).⁵ The former is the older, native term; the latter is a Persian loan-word that appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible and is used to describe a large garden or park, in keeping with what likely was firsthand knowledge of such gardens planted and maintained

3. *Oeconomicus* 4.8, 11, 13–17, 20–24 (Xenophon, *The Economist*. On-line: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1173/1173-h/1173-h.htm>); *Anabasis* 1.4, 10 (Xenophon, *Anabasis*. On-line: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1170/1170-h/1170-h.htm>).

4. See David Stronach, *Pasargadae: A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961 to 1963* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978) 163–65, with pls. 138–40 and figs. 3 and 83; idem, "Royal Garden"; idem, "The Garden as a Political Statement: Some Case Studies from the Near East in the First Millennium B.C.," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 4 (1990) 171–80, esp. pp. 174–77. Dalley argues it is likely that Cyrus modeled both the palace complex and its gardens at Pasargadae on the still-standing complex at Nineveh rather than gardens at Babylon or Susa (*Mystery of Hanging Garden*, 191–93).

5. According to Mordechai Ben Asher, there is no recognizable distinction between the masculine and feminine forms of the term in biblical usage, except that the feminine form is preferred in poetic and prophetic contexts ("The Gender of Nouns in Biblical Hebrew," *Semitics* 6 [1978] 1–14, esp. pp. 4–5).

by Persian and then Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings and nobles, as well as by local elites who imitated them (Song 4:13; Eccl 2:5; Neh 2:8). The following survey includes features specifically mentioned in connection with gardens in the Hebrew Bible; there is no assumption that all the texts included reflect actual gardens that existed at some point in time or space. Particularly in the case of Song of Songs, the components of Solomon's envisioned garden, often used metaphorically, are here assumed to reflect what the author and his intended audience would have considered to have typified a royal garden belonging to an imperial ruler. Most of the texts would seem to reflect a shared expectation about what constituted standard garden components. It must be borne in mind, however, that they likely provide us with partial rather than full insight into what constituted a garden for their authors, who could presume a shared understanding with their audiences and so felt no need to provide a detailed definition.

A *gan/gannah* could include different types of plants or trees under cultivation. The texts mention a vegetable garden, *gan hayyārāq* (Deut 11:10; 1 Kgs 21:2), which suggests there were other types of gardens that did not contain vegetables so that, without any qualifier attached, the term had a wider or more general meaning. Various texts indicate that a garden could contain trees bearing edible fruit (פרי; Jer 29:5; Amos 4:9; Eccl 2:5) and, in the case of a royal garden, nut trees (walnuts in Song 6:11),⁶ constituting what we would call an orchard and a grove, respectively. Some gardens are described to contain fountains, wells, or pools, or to be located beside springs, streams, or rivers that allow them to be well-watered and luxuriant (e.g., Gen 13:10; Num 24:6; Song 4:15–16; Isa 1:29–30; 58:11; Jer 31:12; Neh 3:15). The reference to the gathering of lilies in the royal garden in Song 6:2 might have in mind water lilies grown in pools, or their land-bound cousins (see 6:2–3). Even though this reference alludes to sexual activity, it would seem to build on the type of plants one might typically find in a garden in constructing its metaphor. In the case of water lilies, there would need to be a water feature present, which is likely to have been considered a luxury item found only in the gardens of royalty or high officials in the rainfall-dependent ecosystems of Judah/Yehud. Either way, taken together with the aloes that YHWH plants in Num 24:6, it is possible to suggest some gardens contained flowers and ornamental plants, no doubt as well as specimens grown for their pharmaceutical properties.⁷

6. The walnut was probably introduced into the southern Levant from Anatolia or Persia; by the time of Josephus, the Valley of Geneseret beside the Sea of Galilee was known for its walnut groves; see Michael Zohary, *Plants of the Bible: A Complete Handbook to All the Plants with 200 Full-Color Plates Taken in the Natural Habitat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 64.

7. For the possible range, see Zohary, *Plants of Bible*. For a detailed list of lexemes in the Hebrew Bible associated with gardens, antonyms to gardens, types of trees,

A royal garden could contain a wider range of exotic plants and occupy a much larger space than gardens of ordinary people or even officials. Solomon's envisioned garden contains pomegranate orchards, possibly henna plants, and plants and trees yielding spices and some fragrant incense ingredients (Song 4:13–14; 5:1; 6:2). If Solomon's attributed garden typifies royal gardens, they could have housed an apiary, which would have helped fertilize the orchards, groves, and aromatics while producing edible, exotic honeycomb (Song 5:1), assuming this reference is not merely metaphorical for some aspect of sexual play. Typical royal gardens also could contain pools of water or perhaps, in some cases, 'artificial reservoirs' (ברכות) to be used to water trees as they grew (Eccl 2:6). The reference to timber groves on a royal Persian *paradeisos* (Neh 2:8) suggests style of garden that was conceived of by the author of the book of Nehemiah was more like a park, with woodland reserves in addition to more formally planted garden beds. According to Song 6:2, a royal garden could be spacious enough to allow small flocks and herds to graze, which also would suggest open land left in its natural state or perhaps improved with shade trees, similar to a game park. The reference to the woman as a locked garden in Song 4:12 would seem to allude to a walled garden space with lockable gates restricting entry; if so, some gardens, both royal and nonroyal, probably would have borne these characteristics.

A separate term, *kerem*, is used for 'vineyards' (כרם) (e.g., Amos 4:9; 9:14), which, nevertheless, seem to appear as a component of a royal garden in Song 6:11 and 5:1. The vines envisioned in Song 6:11 are 'grapevines' (גפנים); the Hebrew term is only used of grapevines in biblical texts, not of other types of flowering vines, and the reference in 5:1 to "my wine" presumes a product processed from the grapevines in 6:11. It might be possible that the author of Song of Songs is envisioning vineyards that adjoined the gardens proper rather than being a component of them, but his inclusion of open areas for the grazing of flocks would suggest he has in mind an extensive tract of land that includes both cultivated, planted areas, vineyards, and natural areas within its "confines." It is likely that in nonroyal contexts, a *kerem* would have constituted a separate category of cultivated area, distinct from a 'vegetable garden' (*gan hayyārāq*), groves or orchards, grain fields, and flocks, which were the economic mainstays of a farmstead, with the family garden containing vegetables, aromatics, pharmaceuticals, and perhaps flowers.⁸ However, the ideal

shrubs and vines, whether fruit-bearing or not, as well as verbs that can relate to gardens and gardening or to the destruction of gardens, and other related terms, see Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and the Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 25; Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 40–46.

8. For a consideration of the role of the vineyard as an integral component of the farmstead economy and thus, not likely viewed as a more specialized garden, see Carey

of every person sitting under his or her fig tree and grapevine suggests that an area adjoining the main house might often have had a grape arbor and a fig tree for shade and fruit; it is not clear whether this area would have been considered some form of a garden space or not. In any event, it would have been separate from the walled vineyard used to grow grapes primarily to produce wine.

Gardens and Royal Ideology

In a study of royal Assyrian ideology, M. Liverani has noted how the physical incorporation of new regions into the Assyrian Empire was expressed as a bringing of the periphery into the cosmic center, creating order and civilization out of former chaos. Once conquered, formerly unproductive lands are put into production, arid lands are irrigated, and uninhabited areas are populated with newly built towns and palaces, emphasizing the role of the king as a founder-hero. He suggests the royal garden embodies the attempt to make the center a microcosm that includes elements from the entire world, including the remotest peripheries.⁹ D. Stronach has emphasized a collateral symbolic meaning: the monarch's public persona and cosmic role in assuring the fertility and fruitfulness of the land as a whole. In noting Cyrus's innovative quadripartite garden at Pasargadae defined by stone-lined irrigation channels, he suggests it may have been visually designed to convey the familiar Neo-Assyrian political message that Cyrus controlled and was responsible for the fertility of the four quarters of the world by using stone-working standards newly available in the wake of the conquest of Lydia.¹⁰

E. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (HSM 60; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000) 27–41.

9. Mario Liverani, "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen; Mesopotamia 7; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979) 297–317, esp. pp. 306–7, 314. Nicolas Wyatt points out that, in "The Legend of Sargon," the king is appointed gardener in Akkad, and in the story, the garden sometimes serves as part of the temple complex and sometimes as a representation of the entire royal realm ("Supposing Him to be the Gardener" [John 20,15]. A Study of the Paradise Motif in John," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren* 81/1–2 [1990] 21–38, esp. pp. 35–36). For an early discussion of the Mesopotamian king as gardener, see Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion (King and Saviour IV)* (Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift 1951: 4; Uppsala: Lundquist, 1951). For more recent presentations of various aspects, see Douglas J. Green, "I Undertook Great Works": *The Ideology of Domestic Achievements in West Semitic Royal Inscriptions* (FAT 2/41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) *passim*; and Dalley, *Mysteries of Hanging Garden*, *passim*.

10. Stronach, "Garden as Political Statement," 172, 176. Dalley thinks the irrigated parterre garden was already a hallmark of the Neo-Babylonian royal garden. She bases this assessment on a cuneiform tablet that lists plants in the garden of Merodach Baladan, suggesting the ruled lines that separates plant groupings may reflect the layout of the plant beds, as well as the natural flat topography of the plains (*Mystery of Hanging Garden*, 45–46).

M. Novák, on the other hand, synthesizing the work of others, emphasizes three symbolic values of gardens. The first symbolizes civilization because gardens were the yield of constant and hard work and also because plants and animals from all known countries were kept in the gardens, making them a microcosm of the world that paralleled the mixed populations groups in the cities of the empire. The second value is fertility and metaphorical sexuality associated with plowing and sowing that led to a fertile crop harvest when properly cared for. This goes hand in hand with the garden as a pleasant space for sexual activity. The third aspect he notes is reflected in the layout of royal gardens, with botanical sections and open sections where herds grazed in safety and wild animals were killed. This expresses the ideology of the king as “royal gardener and hunter,” which, in turn emphasized the virility, strength, power, sex appeal, and victory of the garden’s creator, the king.¹¹

After a survey of Assyrian evidence, which need not be repeated in light of the preceding summaries, T. Stordalen includes the scanty evidence from Syria-Canaan as well. A mural in the “Court of Palms” in the Middle Bronze Age palace at Mari seems to portray the coronation of Zimri-Lim. It uses stylized trees that are nourished by heavenly waters to symbolize the king as the archetypal figure who receives and distributes divine blessing in his realm. The Legend of Keret and the Legend of Aqhat found at Ugarit in Late Bronze Age levels imply the king is responsible for earthly fertility; in both, the fields become wastelands when the ruler dies or is near death. Finally, the inscription dated to the 7th century B.C.E. on the Tel Siran bottle suggests the Ammonite king was responsible for agricultural abundance in his realm. He lists his creation of a vineyard, garden, channel (?) and reservoir and asks that they might give joy and happiness for many long days and years to come.¹² It seems the view of the king as “royal gardener” entrusted with the nourishment, maintenance, and development of the earthly realm was part of royal ideology in the western Levant as well.

P. Briant has addressed aspects of Achaemenid royal ideology reflected in Greek texts and in iconography, highlighting the importance placed on the king’s association with vegetation in a number of ways, including his roles as creator of multiple royal gardens (*paradeisoi*), protector of the land and its farmers, maintainer of peace so that farmers could devote their full energy to the cultivation of the land, and guarantor of fertility and prosperity.¹³ He has examined depictions on seals and money from various parts of the Persian

11. Novák, “Artificial Paradise,” 443–44, 452.

12. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 98–101. For his summary and conclusions concerning the Assyrian material, which includes some points not developed in either article sketched above, see pp. 94–98.

13. Pierre Briant, *Rois, tributs et paysans: Études sur les formations tributaires du Moyen-Orient ancien* (Annales littéraires de l’Université de Besançon 269; Paris: Belles Lettres, 1982) 405–30, 432–73.

Empire of the image of a Persian man plowing with two bulls or, in one case, sowing seed while standing in front of two bulls, above which appears the symbol of Ahura Mazda.¹⁴ Acknowledging that the Persian tradition of the king as “farmer/gardener” builds on the prior Mesopotamian tradition,¹⁵ he suggests an underlying, widespread accepted social ideology existed among cultural groups in the Persian Empire in which the king offered the predominantly agrarian population security and his services as divine mediator to ensure the proper growth of abundant harvests in return for their tribute and obedience.¹⁶ Briant has emphasized the use by the Achaemenid court of a unitary and universalist ideology of the Great King and the Persian gods Ahura Mazda, Anahita, and Mithra that went hand in hand in permitting local religious traditions and deities to be linked to the empire gods when they could help affirm the imperial ideology or enhance the prestige and power of the Great King. Royal gardens (*paradeisoi*) provided a concrete manifestation of the fecund power of the king in creating irrigated lush oases in an arid land, islands of optimal productivity, and havens of peace.¹⁷

Remembered Royal Gardens and Gardeners

Kings Xerxes and Artaxerxes of Persia

Two Persian kings are remembered in the Hebrew Bible to have owned gardens: Xerxes and Artaxerxes. Xerxes’ garden was an integral component of the palace complex in the imperial capital city of Susa (Esth 1:5; 7:7–8) and Artaxerxes’ was located in the province of Yehud (Neh 2:8). Each highlights aspects of a wider memory of Persian imperialism.

The author of Esther uses the royal garden to evoke the extravagances and excesses of imperial power and wealth at the distant core of the empire.¹⁸ It is the setting of a seven-day drinking banquet the king gives for all his male

14. Pierre Briant, “À propos du roi-jardinier: Remarques sur l’histoire d’un dossier documentaire,” in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (ed. Wouter Henkelman and Amélie Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 13; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2003) 33–49.

15. Briant, “Roi-jardinier,” 35–36, 45–46.

16. Pierre Briant, “Appareils d’état et développement des forces productives au Moyen-Orient ancien: Le cas de l’empire achéménide,” *La Pensée* 217–18 (1981) 9–23, esp. p. 17 (reproduced in Briant, *Rois, tributs et paysans*, 475–89, esp. p. 483). For a discussion of the link between gardens and Achaemenid cosmogony based largely on later Zoroastrian texts, see Bruce Lincoln, “*Happiness for Mankind*”: *Achaemenian Religion and the Imperial Project* (Acta Iranica 53; Leuven: Peeters, 2012) 59–85.

17. Briant, “Appareils d’état,” 17, 22–23. He also points out that the *paradeisoi* served as military training grounds for the Persian nobility via the hunt, which he sees to be an integral aspect of the ideology of his protecting the countryside and its agrarian population.

18. For this negative caricaturing in the book, see, for example, Jean-Daniel Macchi, “Le refus, la ruse ou la force: Le rapport au pouvoir dans le livre d’Esther,” in *Le*

officials and ministers. While the queen entertains the accompanying women inside the palace proper, the men enjoy the wafting scents and beauty of the plants and the panoramas as part of their experience while drinking to their hearts' content (1:5–8) and no doubt eating delicacies in the court of the garden of the 'little palace' or 'little building' (בֵּיתֶן). This would seem to be a separate building that adjoined the garden and was designed to take advantage of all the sensual stimulation provided by it. Banquets of this sort are likely assumed to have included the enjoyment of sexual pleasure with women provided for the purpose,¹⁹ which in turn evokes the wider connection of gardens with sexual enjoyment.

Later in the story, Esther, now queen, hosts two smaller-scale drinking banquets on consecutive days, with the king and Haman as the only invited guests (chaps. 5–7). The location is 'the building for wine-drinking' (בֵּית מִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן; 7:8), which appears to be an additional building that was on the garden grounds or adjoined it. With only three people involved, something like a gazebo structure might be envisioned. Either way, the king is able to enter the garden of the *bitān* immediately after becoming angry and leaving the "party" in the "house for wine-drinking" upon learning the implications of Haman's edict issued under his royal seal (7:7).

The author of Esther is envisioning a royal complex in which the gardens are an integral part of the larger design. It has different buildings and structures around the grounds from which the different aspects of the gardens can be enjoyed. His conception of Persian palaces and gardens would have been shaped by conventional views of his day, which likely was sometime in the Hellenistic period.²⁰ It is interesting to note, however, that the little that is known currently about the physical layout of royal Persian palace complexes conforms to this image,²¹ and it is thought that the practice was adopted and used widely in the Hellenistic period by the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, in Judea and elsewhere, and was emulated by nonroyal high officials at their estates as well.²²

Pouvoir: Enquêtes dans l'un et l'autre Testament (ed. Didier Luciani and André Wénin; Lectio Divina 248; Paris: du Cerf, 2012) 195–206.

19. For this aspect of drinking parties, which would explain why Queen Vashti refused to join her husband as though she were a common prostitute, see Jean-Daniel Macchi, "The Book of Esther: A Persian Story in Greek Style," in *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics, and Language Relating to Persian Israel* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi, Diana Edelman, and Frank Polak; PHSC 5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009) 109–27, esp. pp. 114–19. The book's likely composition for a Hellenistic audience would mean both author and audience would assume the conventions of symposia of their day would have been followed at the Persian court.

20. See Macchi, "Esther in Greek Style."

21. See Stronach, "Royal Garden at Pasargadae"; idem, "Parterres"; Tuplin, "Parks and Gardens of the Achaemenid Empire."

22. See, for example, Nielsen, *Royal Palace in First Millennium*; Rona-S. Evyasaf, "Gardens at a Crossroads: The Influence of Persian and Egyptian Gardens on the

Artaxerxes' royal garden is a *paradeisos* located in the territory of Judah in his province, Yehud (Neh 2:8). Nehemiah, his royal cup-bearer, requests a letter from the king that he can give to Asaph, keeper of the פֶּרֶט that belongs to the king, when he arrives in Yehud. The letter is to command Asaph to supply timber for royally approved building projects in and possibly nearby Jerusalem. The king complies.

The author of Nehemiah recalls that the Persian king owned a tract of woodland somewhere in the province of Yehud, which was part of a larger complex that constituted a royal *pardes*. This sort of woodland area with mature timber trees would logically have served as a royal hunting ground for the king or his designated representatives when they were in the region. Presumably, there was a royal residence in its vicinity that was used regularly or periodically.

This royal Persian garden evokes the intrusive nature of imperial power. Artaxerxes is an outsider whose main residence is in far away Susa (1:1) but who has laid claim to productive land in this corner of his empire, creating a foreign *pardes* to use when he visits, or for his officials to use in his stead. He is restricting access to local resources in the region, and the physical *pardes* is a constant reminder to people at all levels of local society of who their imperial ruler is and to whom they owe loyalty, conscription work, and taxes.²³ It evokes an exotic but perhaps slightly sinister, nonnative presence alongside some aspects of royal power evoked by the royal gardens in the book of Esther. Nehemiah is able to gain access to its resources for the benefit of those locals and exiles who would want to see the former capital rebuilt, but only because of his personal influence with the imperial king.

King Solomon of Israel and Judah

Solomon serves as a complex site of memory in biblical tradition.²⁴ He is remembered for his extensive political domain (1 Kgs 4:20; 2 Chr 8:2–6; 9:26); his wisdom, exemplified by his composition of proverbs, songs, and extensive knowledge of the natural world (1 Kgs 3:16–28; 5:9–12[4:29–32]; 10:1–10; 2 Chronicles 9; Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25:1; Eccl 1:16–18; Sir 47:14–17;

Hellenistic Royal Gardens of Judea,” *Bollettino di archeologia on line* 1, special volume D/D9/5 (2010). On-line: www.archeologia.beniculturali.it/pages/publicazioni.html.

23. Whether or not a Persian king had created a *pardes* on a former Davidic royal estate or royal lands is immaterial for evoking this negative association, but were that known to have been the case, the negative web of meaning would have been even stronger. We might profitably explore the possibility that Ramat Raḥel was the center of this sort of estate and might even have been what the author of Nehemiah was remembering, if the reference is to something concrete in the past. For details, see staff, *Ancient Biblical Gardens*, and Dafna Langgut et al., “Fossil Pollen Reveals Secrets,” 115–29.

24. For some of these associations, see Niels P. Lemche, “Solomon as Cultural Memory,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 158–81.

Wisdom of Solomon); his wealth (1 Kgs 10:11–23; 2 Chr 2:11[12]; 8:17–18; 9:13–22; Sir 47:18; Eccl 2:8); his prodigious harem (1 Kgs 11:1–3; Sir 47:19; Eccl 2:8); his building activities (Eccl 2:4), including the temple (1 Kgs 5–6; 7:13–9:9; 2 Chr 1:18–7:22; Sir 47:13) and palace in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 7:1–12; 2 Chr 1:18[2:1]; 2:11[12]; 7:11; 8:1) and store cities throughout the kingdom (1 Kgs 9:15–19; 2 Chr 8:4–6); his disobedience to YHWH by worshipping other gods (1 Kgs 11:4–8), and as the creator of one or more gardens and ‘paradises’ פֶּרְדֵּס (*pardes*; Song of Songs; Eccl 2:5). While David, the founder of a renowned dynasty, is remembered very much as a military hero and logically serves as a site for exploring issues of political authority, past, present, and future,²⁵ his son Solomon, who enjoyed peace and thus had time to cultivate regal traits and pursuits other than war, becomes a locus for examining issues of wisdom and religious authority, past, present, and future.²⁶ The role of the king as preeminent priest of his god (Ps 110:4) became problematic once the temple was rebuilt in the Persian period but there no longer was a native king to serve as high priest.²⁷ Both father and son, however, fall because of *hubris*.²⁸

Solomon’s fame as a gardener is a later enhancement of his royal image that builds on the earlier memory of him as a renowned king. It fills out the expected royal attributes of wisdom, wealth, piety, justice, and builder with what

25. For a development of this idea, see Diana Edelman, “David in Israelite Social Memory,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 141–57. David exhibits other typical royal traits as well, particularly piety.

26. Lemche (“Solomon,” 172) suggests religious authority is a central theme but, unfortunately, does not detail how it is explored in Solomonic memory. I think he is correct, but there is not space to develop why in this essay, which focuses on gardens in biblical memory.

27. Assyrian kings also were conceived to be priests to the main god; the title “priest of Assur” was a regular royal title, though its use declined after Assurnasirpal II according to Julian Reade (“Religious Ritual in Assyrian Sculpture,” in *Ritual and Politics in Ancient Mesopotamia* [ed. Barbara Nevling Porter; American Oriental Series 88; New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2005] 7–61, esp. pp. 11–12). Peter Machinist points out that, while the term *šangû* more properly means ‘chief administrator of a temple complex’, depictions of the king undertaking cultic acts and other titles assigned to him, especially ‘purification priest’ (*išippu*) and ‘the one who performs perfectly the rites’ (*mušaklil parsi*), indicate he was considered a fully empowered priest. But this was always in the context of his being the reigning king (“Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria,” in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* [ed. Gary Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis; Brown Judaic Studies 346; Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 2006] 152–88, esp. pp. 155–59). See also Caroline Waezegers, “The Pious King: Royal Patronage of Temples,” in *Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Cultures* (ed. Eleanor Robson and Karen Radner; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 725–51, esp. pp. 737.

28. For a useful comparative study of this theme, see Hans J. L. Jensen, “The fall of the king,” *SJOT* 5/1 (1991) 121–47.

came to be prominent in Neo-Assyrian and Persian royal ideology: master of the four quadrants of the world and the hunter who keeps wild animals at bay, both of which were able to be symbolized by an extensive royal garden that combined cultivated exotic plants and trees with pasture land for herds and woodlands for hunting.²⁹ The book of Kings does not include a royal garden among the list of Solomon's extensive building projects, which otherwise included the royal palace, nor does Chronicles.³⁰ However, if N. P. Lemche is correct that the palace complex is envisioned in Kings as a series of discrete buildings set around courtyards and pavilions,³¹ then the memory would likely be reflecting Persian palace architecture and layout at the earliest, not western Levantine practice during the Iron Age.

In Song 4:12–15, Solomon's sister-bride is likened to a lavish garden that can be sealed off from entry to keep it private and can contain a spring whose water is directed through covered channels that irrigate pomegranate orchards and fragrant spices and plants.³² In 6:2, Solomon is said to go to his garden, which contains beds of spices, where he will graze his flock among the lilies and gather lilies. The Shulamite subsequently descends through the walnut grove to the valley, to see if the vines have budded or if the pomegranates are in bloom (6:11). Another reference to vineyards and pomegranate orchards is found in 7:13[12], which is considered to be an appropriate place for making love (so also 1:16–17). Finally, it can be noted that the garden includes a 'wine house', *bêt hayyāyin* (בֵּית הַיַּיִן), which is a structure for enjoying wine as a prelude to sexual activity (2:4–5) that recalls either the *bîtān* (בֵּיתָן) or the 'house for drinking wine' (בֵּית מִשְׁתֵּה בֵּית) in Esth 1:5–8; 7:7–8.

29. For contrasting Neo-Babylonian royal ideology, which emphasized the role of the king as provisioner of the gods and protector and benefactor of their temples, cults, and cities, see Waerzeggers, "Pious King."

30. In a private communication, Ehud Ben Zvi has noted that, ideologically, the royal garden of Solomon is the temple.

31. Lemche, "Solomon," 178. He notes that the Hasmoneans tried to make some of the Solomonic memory a new or "revived" reality.

32. The use of a garden as a metaphor for a woman's body is widespread in ancient Near Eastern love poetry with a literature too vast to cite. For a tiny sampling, see, e.g., Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983) 103–11 (see pp. 189–210 for Solomon's garden compared to the garden of Eden); Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985) 137–39, 149, 155–56, 164, 276–78; Carey Ellen Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 82–93, 108–9. For a study of this metaphor in a less prominent ritual text, see M. Erica Couto-Ferreira, "The River, the Oven, the Garden: The Female Body and Fertility in a Late Babylonian Ritual Text," in *Approaching Rituals in Ancient Cultures: Questioni di rito: rituali come fonte di conoscenza delle religioni e delle concezioni del mondo nelle culture antiche* (ed. Claus Ambos and Lorenzo Verderame; Revista degli studi orientali n.s. 86/2; Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2013) 97–116.

Solomon's garden is envisioned to have included orchards and groves, exotic, fragrant, spice-yielding bushes and plants, a flock that grazes near a pool of water containing lilies or in open land that contains lilies of the field, and a structure for drinking and sexual enjoyment. The practices of irrigating plant specimens and trees through concealed water channels and of walling a garden with gates that can be locked to restrict access are considered typical. While a fairly generic description, with the selected plants having symbolic values associated with fertility (grapes and pomegranate), the loosening of inhibitions (wine from grapevines, plants that stimulate the senses), sexual allure (myrrh and frankincense as the female genitalia), and possible contraception (pomegranates, dates, honey, fir tree products, mixed wine, oil, myrrh, spikenard and cinnamon),³³ the author of the Song of Songs is associating the renowned King Solomon of his nation's glorious past with the kind of royal gardens that came to typify imperial residences from the Neo-Assyrian period onward. His audience would have expected this distant Davidide to have acted just like the imperial rulers of their own time.

However, all the envisioned garden components and plants serve as a backdrop to a more primary use of the garden in Song of Songs as a metaphor that typified love poetry in the ancient Near East: a woman ripe for sexual enjoyment. In the book, Solomon never claims direct credit for having created the gardens where he and the Shulamite hope to make love; his ownership of them is only alluded to indirectly in the references to "his flock" (2:16), "his garden, myrrh, spice, honeycomb, honey, wine, and milk," (5:1), and "his garden, flock" (6:1–3) all of which have a double entendre. His role as a ruler likewise is underplayed; his coronation is mentioned in 3:11, and, as king, he has a palanquin made from exotic materials (3:9–10), apparently for travel around his city. Thus, in this book, the royal gardener *topos* is very much backgrounded, though it still informs the composition. Here, an envisioned physical royal garden space is regularly intertwined with a woman as a garden, both of which are to be equally possessed and enjoyed by Solomon.

The author of Ecclesiastes provides the most explicit memory of Solomon as an imperial garden builder and maintainer who rivaled Assyrian and Persian emperors.³⁴ He has Solomon reflect over his creation of multiple 'gardens' (גנות) and 'paradises' (פרדסים; 2:5) that contained all varieties of fruit trees that were irrigated from pools of water. The king also muses over the worth of the planted vineyards that seem to have been separate from the garden complexes (2:4) and his large herds and flocks, which apparently were grazed outside the

33. For this function of some of the aromatics and plants, see Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and "Sexuality" in the Hebrew Bible* (BibIntS 26; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 69–89, esp. pp. 87–89.

34. So noted, for example by Jennifer Barbour, *The Story of Israel in the Book of Qohelet: Ecclesiastes as Cultural Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 34.

designated garden-type spaces (2:7). His erection of multiple “buildings” or “houses” in 2:4 might envision the practice of multiple royal residences, which would then account for the multiple gardens and paradises that would have been associated with each.

Had either of these two authors needed inspiration from an actual imperial garden, an example existed conveniently on the southern doorstep of Jerusalem, at the residential complex at Ramat Raḥel, in the 5th–4th centuries B.C.E. Pollen that became embedded in plaster lining a water feature indicated the garden contained willow, poplar, myrtle, water lilies, grapevine, common fig, olive, citron, Persian walnut, cedar of Lebanon, and birch.³⁵ Further examples of such lavish gardens were available later on in the larger vicinity at Alexander’s capital city at Pella, at the Tobiad estate at ‘Iraq el-Amir from ca. 200 B.C.E., and at the Hasmonean royal gardens at Jericho from the 2nd–1st centuries B.C.E., not to mention at Persian, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic capitals for any scribes who traveled on official business.³⁶

Ahab in Samaria

The kingdom of Israel is remembered to have had at least one king who kept gardens, but the memory is passed on in a way that denies him association with the grandeur and power of display of imperial royal gardens. Instead, it perpetuates the rivalry between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, privileging the latter at the expense of the former.

Ahab parallels Solomon as the son of the founder of a dynasty that established the main capital of the kingdom. Like Solomon’s father David, his father Omri is a military man-warrior (1 Kgs 16:16), but he is denied any positive traits that would cast him as a hero-founder. Instead, he is made king by the people, but only after his rival, who also had popular support, is eliminated in a sort of civil war (16:21–22). While David also is remembered to have been made king in Judah by popular support against his rival, King Saul of Israel

35. For details, see staff, “Ancient Biblical Gardens”; Langgut et al., “Fossil Pollen Reveals Secrets.”

36. Ernest Will and François Larché, vol. 1 of *‘Iraq al Amir: Le château du Tobiade Hyrcan* (2 vols.; Paris: Geuthner, 1991, 2005); Ehud Netzer, “Tyros, the ‘Floating Palace,” in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins; Studies in Christianity and Judaism 9; Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2000) 340–53; idem, “The Winter Palaces of the Judean Kings at Jericho at the End of the Second Temple Period,” *BASOR* 228 (1977) 1–13; Evyasaf, “Gardens at Crossroads”; Gilles Touchais, “Chronique des fouilles en 1982,” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 107 (1983) 792–95; Phōtios M. Petsas, *Pella: Alexander the Great’s Capital* (Institute for Balkan Studies 182; Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1978) 83–129. Petra also contained this sort of garden, but outsiders did not frequent that site, so it would not have served as a possible inspiration.

(2 Sam 2:1–4, 10–11), he is remembered to have had prior divine endorsement as future king (1 Samuel 16). Omri does not; he is initially acclaimed king by the army due to the circumstance of being in the right place at the right time when news of Zimri's assassination of the legitimate king arrives (1 Kgs 16:15–16). As chief army commander, he is the logical person to restore and then maintain order, though this logic is subsequently challenged when a second candidate, Tibni, gains popular support.

Continuing a deliberate contrast in memory between the Omride and Davidic dynasties, the second generations are also cast as opposites, except that both shared the trait of disobedience to YHWH by worshiping other gods (1 Kgs 11:4–10; 16:30; 18:18). Solomon's wisdom and justice (1 Kgs 3:16–28; 4:29–34; 5:7–12; 10:1–10; 2 Chronicles 9; Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25:1; Eccl 2:1; Sir 47:14–17; Wisdom of Solomon) is replaced in Ahab's case by deferral to his wife to deal with challenges and subvert justice (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:4; 19:1–2; 21:7–15). While both built palaces and cities (1 Kgs 7:1–12; 9:15–19; 22:39), Solomon's building of the temple for the legitimate worship of YHWH (1 Kings 3–9) is contrasted with Ahab's patronage of a sanctuary for Ba'al in Samaria (1 Kgs 16:32). This contrast is furthered by the parallel established between Solomon and Ahab as the creators of royal gardens, once that memory was inscribed for Solomon.³⁷

While Solomon is remembered to have had an extensive garden that rivaled those of other imperial rulers, Ahab is remembered to have wanted to create a vegetable garden on the plot that contained Naboth's vineyard, because it was near his palace (1 Kgs 21:2). The story of Naboth's vineyard ostensibly explores the issues of the inalienable rights of ancestral land (v. 3) and royal abuse of power (vv. 8–16).³⁸ However, other networks of meaning emerge from intertextuality, which then become part of the social memory of the community reading and rereading these texts they consider central to their identity. A vegetable garden is likely to have been a component of a large royal garden, but Ahab is denied any memory of having had extensive royal gardens, with

37. For the proposal that the story of Naboth's vineyard is meant to evoke the David-Bathsheba affair, see Michael Avioz, "The Analogies between the David-Bathsheba Affair and the Naboth Narrative," *JNSL* 32/2 (2006) 115–28. For an earlier analysis of how David and Ahab are paralleled literarily, which includes a wider consideration of similarities, see Peter Miscall, *The Workings of Old Testament Narrative* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 22–32.

38. While this story is commonly construed to address royal abuse during the monarchic period, E. Axel Knauf argues it refers explicitly to imperial abuse during the Persian period, when communal land was being seized to create military fiefs; see "Inside the Walls of Nehemiah's Jerusalem: Naboth's Vineyard," in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin* (ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 185–94.

orchards, vineyards, water features, exotic plants and woodlands.³⁹ He is here merely seeking to be able to grow vegetables close(r) to the palace.⁴⁰ This is part of a larger strategy to ensure he is remembered in Judean circles to have been an unimportant, evil monarch of an adjoining, insignificant kingdom.⁴¹

(King?) “‘Uzza’” of Judah

A second possible remembered royal Judahite garden-builder is Azariah/Uzziah, if he is, in fact, the originator of the garden of ‘Uzza’, rendered *Uzza* in English Bibles (2 Kgs 21:18, 26; LXX version of 2 Chr 36:8). The king’s name is never spelled with a final *’alep* in the account of his reign in either Kings or Chronicles. However, it might be possible to argue, on analogy with the name Ezra, which also ends in an *’alep*, that both names exhibit a trend that developed in the Persian period of dropping the final divine element of the name, *-yah/yahul/yaw*, *’el* or another divine name, and substituting the Aramaic definite article *’alep* to create a shortened form of the name that turned the first ele-

39. Contra Baruch Halpern, who construes *yārāq* in such a way to see here a plan by Ahab to convert the land from agricultural use to a royal park filled with exotic import, employing the trope of the king as naturalist found in Assyrian display inscriptions and then in royal annals (“The Construction of the Davidic State: An Exercise in Historiography,” in *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States* [ed. Volkmar Fritz and Philip R. Davies; JSOTSup 228; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996] 44–75, esp. pp. 48–50). The term *yārāq* clearly designates edible greens and vegetables grown by ordinary people in Deut 11:10, not exotic green plants that would set apart a royal garden or park from an ordinary one. But his recognition of the trope’s familiarity in biblical circles reinforces how its application to Ahab goes against expectations, which highlights in turn a likely ideological edge to the portrayal used to reinforce a particular sentiment in social memory.

40. Philip Davies has drawn my attention to a possible pun at play here, whether intended or not by the original writer. The name Samaria, *shomron*, is close to the Hebrew word for fennel (*shummar*), so for later biblical audiences, Ahab’s desired vegetable garden could have been seen to caricature the royal capital of Samaria as a fennel patch. *Shummar* is first attested in rabbinic Hebrew in Talmud Yerushalmi and is thought to be Aramaic in origin, so it might not have been in use at the time the author of Kings wrote. However, it is recognized that the vocabulary used in Biblical Hebrew does not reflect the entire vocabulary of spoken Hebrew, so the possibility that ancient Hebrew and Aramaic shared this term for fennel cannot be ruled out. I thank Yairah Amit for confirming the understood history of the word with a colleague. In another personal communication, Nick Wyatt has pointed out that the root *th-m-r* is attested in Ugaritic in the Late Bronze period, making its use in spoken Hebrew in the Iron Age plausible, even if as-yet unattested (Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* [trans. and ed. Wilfred J. E. Watson; rev. ed.; 2 vols.; Handbuch der Orientalistik 67; Leiden: Brill, 2004] 2:917–18).

41. For the deliberate negative manipulation of the memory of Samaria to diminish it in favor of a positive memory of Jerusalem, see Russell Hobson, “The Memory of Samaria in the Book of Kings,” pp. 219–229 in this volume.

ment into an descriptive trait: 'the helper' and 'the strong one'.⁴² However, it is equally possible that 'Uzza' 'the strong one' is a nickname that would not have derived from the shortening of a given personal name but from a physical or circumstantial trait an individual had or bore that made the attribute apropos.⁴³

The author of the book of Kings has no recollection of Azariah/Uzziah having built a garden in or near Jerusalem; only that when he became leprous, he lived in a separate⁴⁴ palace and that his son, Jotham, lived in the (main) palace (in Jerusalem) and governed the people of the land (2 Kgs 15:5). After death, Azariah/Uzziah slept with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of David (15:7). But curiously, subsequent kings of the Davidic line are remembered as having been buried in the garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza: Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:18), his son Amon (2 Kgs 21:26), and in the LXX version of Chronicles, Amon's grandson, Jehoiakim (2 Chr 36:8, *ganoza*). This is even stranger because his own son Jotham (2 Kgs 15:38), his purported grandson Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:20), and his purported great-grandson Hezekiah are not remembered to have been buried in this garden; the first two, like Azariah himself, slept with their ancestors and were buried with them, while nothing is said concerning Hezekiah's place of burial; only that he slept with his ancestors.⁴⁵

42. Other names that might exhibit this same tendency, whether the first element in the full name was originally a noun, a verb, or an adjective, include Hasupha 'the quick one' (Ezra 2:43; Neh 7:46), Sia/Siaha 'the slandered one' (Ezra 2:44; Neh 7:47), Neqoda 'the speckled one' (Ezra 2:48, 60; Neh 7:50, 62), Haqupha 'the bent one' (Ezra 2:51; Neh 7:53), Harsha 'the engraver' (Ezra 2:52; Neh 7:54, 61), Hatipha 'the abducted one' (Ezra 2:54; Neh 7:56), and Peruda/Perida 'the separated one' (Ezra 2:55; Neh 7:57).

43. Josephus had no trouble equating the two names regardless of how he understood the derivation or origin of 'Uzza'; he states that Uzziah was buried alone in his garden (*Ant.* 9.10.4), thereby assuming that the garden of 'Uzza' had been created by King Uzziah while simultaneously rejecting the burial traditions in 2 Kgs 21:8, 26, and LXX 2 Chr 36:8 that located three other royal burials in this location/space.

44. The precise meaning of this adjective is not clear; proposals include 'separate', 'tax-exempt', 'freed', and on the basis of the verbal root, possibly 'disguised' or 'concealed' in various standard Biblical Hebrew dictionaries such as BDB and *HALOT*. Any or all of them could apply in the current verse; Uzziah was concealed from the public gaze by being moved to a new, separate, or separated residence that would have been exempted from contributing to royal revenues, being part of the larger personal royal estate. The identical term, namely, *הרחפשי* *בית*, is used in a Ugaritic text to describe a tomb in the earth, which has led Nicolas Wyatt to suggest it designates a tomb in 2 Kgs 15:5 as well ("Supposing Him the Gardener," 31). However, the current context suggests the king occupied this residence while he was still alive and that it was separate from the main palace, where his son assumed the responsibilities of kingship while he was still alive, and not in his own name.

45. The author of Chronicles has rectified this unexpected silence by adding an explicit burial notice: Hezekiah slept with his ancestors and was buried on the ascent to / slope of the tombs of the sons of David (2 Chr 32:33).

The author of Chronicles, who has enhanced the memory of Uzziah for his later Persian or early Hellenistic audience, says nothing explicitly about his having created a royal garden either. He has portrayed him as a king who is punished by YHWH for his *hubris*. Playing off the king's name, "the strong one of YHWH," he attributes to Uzziah the expansion of borders at the expense of the Philistines, control over the Ammonites, victory against the Arabs and Meunites, the fortification of Jerusalem, the maintenance of a strong standing army, the hewing of cisterns, the building of towers in the wilderness, and the placing of farmers and vinedressers in the hills and fertile lands (2 Chr 26:6–15). All of these actions are presented as evidence of his having "grown strong," which led eventually to his becoming proud, and his fall (26:16). His burial site is remembered in a way that highlights his leprosy once again; he slept with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in the burial field that belonged to the kings, even though they said, "He was leprous" (2 Chr 26:23).⁴⁶

Arguably, the summary statement that Uzziah loved the soil in 2 Chr 26:10 is an expression of the *topos* of the gardener king, which, as sketched above in the section "Gardens and Royal Ideology," had a long history in the ancient Near East. Certainly, his expanded presentation in 26:10 as a king actively involved in maximizing the productivity of various types of land within his kingdom cast him squarely in this mold to audiences in the Hellenistic period and resonates well with Briant's descriptions of Persian ideology. Newly hewn cisterns allow him to increase herds grazing in the Shephelah and in the plain, while farmers and vinedressers increase agricultural yields in the hills and on fertile lands.

In support of the garden's intended owner as King Uzziah, it has been proposed that Manasseh, Amon, and Jehoikim in the LXX version were associated deliberately with Uzziah as a way of dishonoring their negative memory even further by connecting them with the impure leper-king.⁴⁷ Manasseh is por-

46. Here, I am going against the normal trend that assumes that the final clause introduced by *kî* provides an explanation for why he was buried apart from the others, rather than with them, which has also been assumed in many of the versions. All dead bodies are considered unclean, whether they were diseased in life or not, and once a king died and became a member of the royal dead ancestors, who likely were considered to be transformed into minor divine beings, his leprosy should no longer have been an issue.

47. The ideological dimension of these potential linkages is particularly highlighted by Francesca Stavrakopoulou, "Exploring the Garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza: Death, Burial, and Ideologies of Kingship," *Bib* 87 (2006) 1–21, esp. pp. 3–4. She notes it had previously been recognized by both Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (FAT 11; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994) 250–54 and Nadav Na'aman, "Death Formulae and the Burial Place of the Kings of the House of David," *Bib* 85 (2004) 245–54, esp. pp. 252–53, though in varying ways. She has not included the earlier proposal of Wyatt, which cor-

trayed in Kings to have been the most evil king who ruled over Judah (2 Kgs 21:1–18), and the rehabilitation of his memory in Chronicles ends with no mention of the garden of ‘Uzza’/Uzza as his burial place (2 Chr 33:1–20). Amon is said in Kings to have followed in his father’s footsteps, justifying his association as well (2 Kgs 21:19–26). He remains evil in Chronicles, leading to his assassination and the punishment of the assassins, but interestingly, no burial information is given (2 Chr 33:21–25). Because Jehoiakim was put on the throne by Necho in place of the legitimate king Jehoahaz, was taken into exile with the temple vessels, and was remembered to have committed abominations and to have had allegations against him verified, his assignment to a final resting place beside the unclean leper Uzziah within the memory of one early Jewish community reading and listening to Chronicles would have seemed appropriate. Even so, those who champion this view have offered no explanation as to why the text consistently spells the name of the person associated with the garden with a final *’alep* and not with the divine element *-yah*. The latter would have made the equation with the leper king Uzziah patent for all.

The lack of the attribution of a specific royal garden site to Uzziah’s commissioning or creation in either Chronicles or Kings leads one to wonder if the garden of ‘Uzza’/Uzza where Manasseh, Amon, and Jehoiakim were remembered to have been buried should be associated instead with another individual. One possibility would be a garden established at the site called Perez-‘Uzzah, in memory of the priest named ‘Uzza’/Uzza, son of Abinadab, who was killed at the threshing floor of Nakon/Kidon for having touched the Ark during its transport (2 Sam 6:3, 6; 1 Chr 13:7, 9–11).⁴⁸ It can be noted that the priest’s name is initially spelled in the MT with a final *’alep* in 2 Sam 6:3 and 6 but then is spelled with a final *he* in 6:7 and again in the explanation of the place name Perez-‘Uzzah in v. 8. This suggests a possible secondary attempt to link the “garden of ‘Uzza” in Kings with the site of Perez-‘Uzzah at or near the threshing floor of Nakon in 2 Samuel in the MT tradition.⁴⁹ Whether there is any historical merit in that possible move is uncertain, but it could have been a

responds closely with what she proceeds to argue (“‘Supposing Him the Gardener,” 31), even though she cites this study later in n. 48.

48. So, for example, Benjamin Mazar, who places it east of Jerusalem, in the village of Silwan (*The Mountain of the Lord* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975] 187); Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, who appear to cite this argument approvingly (*II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 11; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988] 270); and Iain W. Provan, who argues an intentional connection is made with this divinely punished priest in order to place on Manasseh and Amon “connotations of spectacular judgment upon impiety” (*I & 2 Kings* [New International Biblical Commentary; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995] 269).

49. For the possible kind of entanglements that might then be created in the minds of individual readers and, perhaps, have become commonly shared associations within

subsequent realignment of group memory, either to replace an earlier association that had become problematic, like one with the leprous King Uzziah,⁵⁰ or to provide an association at a point where a nonverbalized memory had been lost and the need was felt for some sort of identification.

Alternatively, it might have come to recall a garden Manasseh is remembered to have added to a royal palace complex (2 Kgs 21:18), which bore its own name: “the garden of the strong one.”⁵¹ If so, his son’s burial in the same location would have made sense. However, two caveats are needed here. First, the expression “his palace” can equally be translated “his tomb,” which would then refer to a new (?) funerary garden established by Manasseh at an undisclosed location. Second, the expression “his house/tomb” is missing in the LXX and L versions and might have been added to the MT to harmonize the account in Kings with the statement in 2 Chr 33:20 that Manasseh was buried “in his house/tomb.” In this case, the earlier memory in Kings would have been that Manasseh had been buried in a garden, in his garden, or in the garden of Uzziah or of ‘Uzza’/Uzza.

social memory networks, see the essay on pp. 79–97 in this volume by Francis Landy, “Threshing Floors and Cities.”

50. Two alternate but less-likely options have been proposed. The first is that ‘Uzza’ was a title used to refer to the local Jerusalemite deity, mlk/’ttr, a cultic garden for whom was located near the pool of Siloam, close to the point where the Kidron Valley joins the Valley of Hinnom; so John Gray, “The Desert God ‘Attr in the Religion and Literature of Canaan,” *JNES* 8 (1949) 72–83, esp. p. 81. According to this view, the “garden of the king” belonged to a divine king, not a human king. The second is that ‘Uzza’ originally referred to the Arabian astral deity al-‘Uzzā, who presumably had a sanctuary located inside or just outside the city walls that also contained a garden on its grounds, built for the Arabian wife of Manasseh and mother of Amon, Meshullemet bat Ḥaruš of Yotba; so, for example, John W. McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians 732–609 BC* (Studies in Biblical Theology 2/26; London: SCM, 1973) 24–25, 95. T. Raymond Hobbs notes Meshullemet is not specifically Arabian but that her father’s name is known from an Arabic inscription in Sinai, so she certainly was foreign and likely “deep southern” (2 *Kings* [WBC 13; Waco, TX: Word, 1985] 309–10). He fails to mention McKay’s proposal about al-‘Uzza’, associating him instead with Gray’s previous arguments about ‘Attr.

51. Na’aman argues the garden was built instead by Hezekiah but that responsibility for it was transferred to Manasseh to avoid any negative impression becoming associated with Hezekiah for abandoning the intramural royal burial ground (“Death Formulae,” 251, 253–54). His line of reasoning is heavily indebted to the previous arguments of Raymond Weill concerning Hezekiah’s reforms (*La cité de David: Compte rendu des fouilles exécutées, à Jérusalem, sur le site de la ville primitive. Campagne de 1913–1914* [Paris: Geuthner, 1920] 35–44, esp. pp. 43, 156–57, 190) and to arguments made by Schmidt that Hezekiah might have removed the bones of his ancestors from “the City of David” to the palace complex to avoid their desecration by the Assyrians, should they have taken Jerusalem, but that this was secondarily assigned to Manasseh (*Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 253). Schmidt does not cite Weill and so appears not to have read him but seems to make many of the same arguments, with some expansion.

If the last option, the garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza, is favored for the location of Manasseh's burial, then yet another candidate for the creator of the garden is possible: "the strong one" could be an oblique reference to Manasseh's father, Hezekiah. In this case, the synonymous noun **יָצַח** would be used in place of the verb **קָצַח** to create either a nickname or an oblique reference: 'Yah has strengthened me' is shortened to 'the strong one' or is alluded to via this semantic shorthand. Because the regnal formulas with their ages of kings and lengths of reign would have a rather precocious Ahaziah fathering Hezekiah at the age of 11, the author of Kings may have decided to "trouble" the orthodox memory of an unbroken line of Davidic rulers over Judah with a "minority report" that would allow room for future generations to suspect that perhaps Hezekiah was not the biological son of Ahaz after all but from a collateral family line or a newly introduced line.⁵² Another hint in this direction may be the failure of the reference to burial "with his ancestors" to be applied to the kings after Ahaz.⁵³ Either circumstance would provide a logical explanation for why Hezekiah might have established a new royal burial ground, being the founder of a new dynastic line. The failure to include details about his burial in the normal death burial and succession notice at the end of the narrative of his reign would be designed to draw attention to the anomaly in his ancestry, just as the opening formula does, with oblique details about his resting place supplied in the burial notices of his son and grandson.

An independent memory of a royal garden inside or just outside⁵⁴ the walls of Jerusalem is echoed in 2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:4, 52:7, and Neh 3:15–16, without

52. For a full discussion and set of arguments, see Donald V. Etz, "The Genealogical Relationships of Jehoram and Ahaz, and of Ahaziah and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah," *JSOT* 21 (1996) 39–53, esp. pp. 50–52. He suggests Hezekiah might have been the son of Jotham, the biological brother or half-brother of Ahaz, even though he recognizes the ideological nature of the unbroken Davidic lineage in biblical memory. In addition to the suspicious, non-Davidic lineage of Jehoram and Ahaziah, also noted by Etz, Lowell K. Handy has questioned whether the boy-king Joash, who was allegedly rescued from a massacre and hidden in the temple until crowned, was actually of Davidic blood ("Speaking of Babies in the Temple," in *Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies* 8 [1988] 155–65).

53. This assumes its unexpected reappearance in the burial notice of Jehoikim in the LXX version of 2 Kgs 24:6 alongside the specification that he was buried in the garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza is not original. It is noteworthy that when added, the LXX notice reinforces the close association of Jehoikim with the line of Hezekiah, making him the final king of that line to be buried in that family's burial chamber or "plot."

54. Weill located the garden on the slopes of the Kidron Valley at the southeast end of the city of David, watered by canal IV, an extension of canal II (*La cité de David: Compte rendu des fouilles exécutées, à Jérusalem, sur le site de la ville primitive. Campagne de 1923–1924* [Institut Français d'archéologie de Beyrouth bibliothèque archéologique et historique 44; Paris: Geuthner, 1947] 94–96). He has been followed widely; see, for example, Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 174; David Ussishkin, who added the suggestion that the original destination of the Siloam tunnel was here, to water

any attachment to a particular king as its creator. It was recalled to have lain near a gate located “between the two walls” that the final king of Judah, Zedekiah, had used to escape from the city to flee east to the Arabah, only to be captured by Nebuchadnezzar’s army in the plains of Jericho. If Neh 2:14 and 3:15 recall the same locale, which is likely, it is remembered to have been near the pool of Shelah⁵⁵ and to have been near the Spring Gate and near stairs that descended from the City of David. It might also be noteworthy that the ensuing v. 16 could recall that some or all of the royal Davidic graves were located near this garden,⁵⁶ or possibly even in it, especially if the “artificial pool”

this garden (“The Water Systems of Jerusalem during Hezekiah’s Reign,” in *Meilenstein: Festgabe für Herbert Donner zum 16. Februar 1995* [ed. Manfred Weippert and Stefan Timm; Ägypten und Altes Testament 30; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995] 289–307, esp. pp. 300–303); and Philip J. King and Lawrence Stager, who equate it further with the terraces of the Kidron in 2 Kgs 23:4 (*Life in Biblical Israel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 217). In contrast, Yeivin argued the garden lay west of the City of David proper (“Sepulchers of David,” 43), while Na’aman located it outside the city wall, near a new palace residence built by Hezekiah (“Death Formulae,” 250–51, 253–54).

55. It is unclear if the pool of Shelah in v. 15 is identical with the “manmade pool” in the next verse or if the two are separate. For the likely location of the pool of Shelah in the late monarchic period at the bottom of the valley in the present garden, see Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron, and Omri Lerna, “Recent Discoveries in the City of David, Jerusalem,” *IEJ* 57 (2007) 153–68, esp. p. 166. Logic suggests that any pool located within the city walls would have had public access to collect water so that it would not have lain inside the grounds of an internal royal garden, unless it specifically had been made as a public garden. Dalley suggests the garden might have been created by Hezekiah, imitating Sennacherib’s great garden at Nineveh, and that the Siloam water project was undertaken to make water available for the garden year round, as necessary (*Mystery of Hanging Garden*, 174–75).

56. A series of burial notices indicate that the Davidic kings through Ahaz were buried either ‘in’ or ‘next to’ (preposition ׀) the city of David: 1 Kgs 2:10; 11:43; 14:31; 15:8, 24; 22:51[50]; 2 Kgs 8:24; 9:28; 12:22[21]; 14:20; 15:38; 16:20. Various locations have been proposed based on archaeological and textual information; for a useful summary, see Y. L. Rahmani, “Ancient Jerusalem’s Funerary Customs and Tombs, Part Two,” *BA* 44/4 (1981) 229–35. The royal tombs are located inside the city limits, at the southeastern tip in an area that was later severely altered by Roman quarrying, for example, by Weill (*Cité de David*, 157–83, esp. pp. 172, 190–92). Jeffery R. Zorn agrees these were the royal Davidic burial caves but locates the subsequent burials in the garden of ‘Uzza/Uzza in the palace complex adjoining the temple (“The Burials of the Judean Kings: Sociohistorical Considerations and Suggestions,” in *“I Will Speak the Riddle of Ancient Times”: Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* [ed. Aren M. Maier and Pierre de Miroschedji; 2 vols.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006] 2:801–20, esp. p. 813). Mazar, on the other hand, located the necropolis initially here, then west of the temple mount for the period from Yehoram to Ahaz (ca. 850–725 B.C.E.) in the presumed (burial) field that belonged to the kings (2 Chr 26:23), and finally, in the garden of ‘Uzza/Uzza

that is mentioned is identical to the pool of Shelah in the preceding verse.⁵⁷ 2 Chr 32:30 might imply this pool was located either in the western portion of the City of David or west of the City of David proper. However, this garden need not be equated with the garden of 'Uzza', even though this is a common assumption.⁵⁸ The scant information retained within biblical memory could recall a royal funerary garden containing some of the burials of later Davidic

east of the City of David, close to Silwan village, which was established by Manasseh (*Mountain of the Lord*, 183–89). The proposed southern location is different from what is recalled in Ezek 43:7–8. There, the graves would appear to have been located at the northern end of the royal compound, near the southern wall of the temple complex. As a result, a number of scholars have suggested when the original burial ground became full, the garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza, which was located either in the palace proper or on the northern palace grounds, became the new burial grounds for kings beginning with Hezekiah or Manasseh; so, e.g., Jan Simons, *Jerusalem in the Old Testament: Researches and Theories* (Leiden: Brill, 1952) 207–8; Joachim Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt* (Mt. 23,29, Lk. 11,47): *Eine Untersuchung zur Volksreligion der Zeit Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958) 53–56; Gwilym H. Jones, *1 & 2 Kings* (2 vols.; NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984) 2:600; Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, who rejects the proposal the change was due to the former burial ground being “full” (*Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* [JSOTSup 123, JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992] 118–19); apparently Donald J. Wiseman, who locates it in the palace but specifically rejects any equation of 'Uzza' with King Uzziah or the deity al-'Uzza (*1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* [Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1993] 293; Schmidt, who talks of a mausoleum in the palace built by Hezekiah that rehousing the remains of earlier kings as well as his remains and those of most subsequent kings (*Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 250–54); Na'aman, “Death Formulae,” 248–49, 251–52 (for kings through Ahaz), and Zorn, “Burials of Judean Kings,” 813. Shmuel Yeivin locates the tombs of the early Davidides in the palace vicinity on the acropolis (“The Sepulchers of the Kings of the House of David,” *JNES* 7 [1948] 30–45, esp. p. 35). However, a looser interpretation would allow them to have been located anywhere within the royal compound, including at the southern tip of the city.

57. Archaeological evidence has been uncovered of a previously unknown, large manmade, rock-cut pool predating the Siloam tunnel near the Gihon spring in the City of David. However, according to the excavators, it had already been filled in and built over by the late 8th century B.C.E., so it is not likely to have been readily visible and identifiable as a local landmark in the Persian or Hellenistic period unless its memory had been perpetuated as a local landmark in spite of the change in use and occupational gap at the site. See Reich, Shukron, and Lerna, “Recent Discoveries,” 153–63.

58. So, for example, Yeivin, “Sepulchers of David,” 34–35; Gray, “Desert God 'Attr,” 8; Wyatt, “Supposing Him the Gardener,” 30–31; Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings: A Continental Commentary* (trans. A. Hagedorn; Continental Commentaries; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 392; Na'aman, “Death Formulae,” 250. Stavrakopoulou explicitly avoids this equation, appearing to argue against any historical basis to the garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza in favor of a literary, ideological origin, although she argues that mortuary gardens like the garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza were a feature of ancient Judahite culture (“Exploring Garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza,” 4, 6–7).

kings that was separate from an intramural or extramural royal garden used as a source of pleasure, food, medicinal plants, and diversion by members of the royal family and their guests once it was established.

The garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza' is a somewhat enigmatic memory that can evoke multiple associations for readers: with the slain priest Uzza'/Uzzah and the site of Perez-Uzzah near the threshing floor that became the site of the temple in Jerusalem; with the leper-king Azariah/Uzziah, with three kings remembered to have been buried in it, Manasseh, Amon, and Jehoikim in the LXX, and obliquely, with King Hezekiah, the likely founder of a new dynastic line who established a new royal burial chamber in which he and his descendants were buried. It might also have evoked associations with a space remembered as the royal garden, which likely was a separate space, but one created, owned, and maintained by generations of kings of Jerusalem. The garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza specifically is associated with royal burial, which raises a question as to its status as a physical garden space in which one or more burial chambers were located or its euphemistic use to describe a tomb whose chamber walls might have been decorated as a symbolic garden. The question whether "garden" was a synonym for a tomb will be explored in more depth in the next section.

Memorial Gardens

The Bible contains a memory of a type of garden that housed tombs where cultic activity took place. As already indicated in the section dealing with the garden of 'Uzza'/Uzza, some scholars have understood that site as a royal mortuary garden (2 Kgs 21:18, 26). Other possible memories of gardens of this sort are found in Isa 1:29–30, 65:3–5, and 66:17.⁵⁹

All three passages are expanded memories associated with the prophet Isaiah, who is used to condemn one or more rites, rituals, or practices that were being performed in gardens, physical or symbolic, in Persian-era Yehud.⁶⁰ The passage in Isa 1:27–31 looks forward to the redemption of Zion by justice and the fiery consumption of those who abandon YHWH. It then condemns those who delight in "oaks" and choose gardens; "the strong" and their deeds will be destroyed by fire.⁶¹ In Isa 65:3–4, the people are condemned for offering

59. For a study of the rhetorical structure of the unit represented by Isa 65:1–66:7, which is thought to stem from the same hand as 1:29–31, see Paul A. Smith, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah: The Structure, Growth, and Authorship of Isaiah 56–66* (VTSup 65; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 128–72, 186.

60. For Isaiah as a complex site in biblical memory, see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Isaiah a Memorable Prophet: Why Was Isaiah so Memorable in the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Periods? Some Observations," in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 365–83.

61. Judging by the semantic range of the underlying root and examples of usage, the term for "the strong" has overtones of wealth deriving from the basic root meaning and

sacrifice and burning incense in gardens, sitting in graves, and spending the night in protected or preserved places,⁶² where they eat pork and have the broth of a “desecrated sacrifice” in their cooking vessels, and are sanctified. This same set of practices is taken up again in 66:17, with some additional dimensions attacked. They include sanctification and purification before entering the gardens, the eating of something considered a ‘cultic abomination’ (שֶׁקֶץ) and mice in addition to pork, and the presence of an ‘other/former one’ (אֲחֵר) in the center. Isa 66:3 is often added as a fourth passage in the wider discussion of the garden activities in Trito-Isaiah because of its reference to priests of the Yahwistic cult offering pig blood, which some have understood to be related to the eating of pork in 65:4 and 66:17.⁶³ Verse 3 condemns the priests as violent

use, versus physical strength or heroism. We can ask whether this is a play on, or allusion to, a regular burial practice involving a fire ritual, whether limited to royal burial or used more widely, that is said to have been observed at King Asa’s burial (2 Chr 16:14) and specifically not to have been used at King Jehoram’s burial (2 Chr 21:19).

62. The same term is used in Akkadian (*a-šar ni-šir-ti*) to designate a tomb: see John McGinnis, “A Neo-Assyrian Text Describing a Royal Funeral,” *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 1.1 (1987) 1–13, esp. pp. 1, 4, 5; Josef Tropper, *Nekromatie: Totenbe-frung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (AOAT 223; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989) 324–25; see also Gerdien Jonker, *The Topography of Remembrance: The Dead, Tradition and Collective Memory in Mesopotamia* [SHR 68; Leiden: Brill, 1995] 194). For this reason, there is no need to adopt the suggestion that the phrase has lost a *yod* and should be read instead בֵּין צוּרִים, whichever option for translation is preferred. The first is ‘between the rocks/clefts/rock crypts’ (so, for example, F. Feldman, *Das Buch Isaías*, 2:273 [cited by Dahood]; Claus Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja* [ATD 19; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966] 316, 318). The second is ‘inside the mountains’, reflecting the hewn chambers in the face of the cliffs above Silwan (so Mitchell Dahood, “Textual Problems in Isaiah,” *CBQ* 22 [1960] 400–409, esp. pp. 408–9). He sees this to be consistent with the LXX rendition of the phrase as ‘in the caves’ and with an inscription above a tomb cut in the Wadi Kidron, *ḥdr bktp ḥsr* ‘[tomb]-chamber in the side/slope of the rock/mountain’. It would not have been easy to access the cliff-hewn tombs regularly to perform such rites.

63. So, for example, Thomas K. Cheyne, who notes that a wild boar kills Adonis in the myth about him, so that the prohibition against eating pork might be an attempt to suppress participation in rites for Adonis, where pork was consumed (*The Prophecies of Isaiah: A New Translation with Commentary and Appendices* [2 vols.; London: Kegan Paul and Trench & Company, 1880–81] 2:113); Susan Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 203. Roland de Vaux noted the use of pigs in rituals was rare in the ancient Near East and eastern Mediterranean, limited to the demonic and underworld in Mesopotamia and among the Hittites, to initiation rites of the mystery cult of Eleusis, to the cult of the chthonic deities Seth in Egypt and Demeter in Greece, and to annual rites in Harran and Cyprus and at the full moon in Egypt (“Les sacrifices de porcs en Palestine et dans l’Ancien Orient,” in *Von Ugarit nach Qumran: Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen und altorientalischen Forschung*. Otto Eissfeldt [ed. Johannes Hempel and Leonhard Rost; BZAW 77; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1958] 250–65, esp. pp. 250–62). Ulrich

men who strike other men, possibly committing murder, who break the neck of a dog, who participate in rites involving the offering of pig's blood,⁶⁴ and who

Hübner has noted that in Egypt, the pig was sacrificed to the deities Seth and Nut and used in luck-bringing amulets and its flesh in medicine, while in Mesopotamia, it was closely associated with Lamashtu and its fat was used in medicine ("Schweine, Schweineknochen und ein Speiseverbot im alten Israel," *VT* 39 [1989] 225–36, esp. p. 229). For the use of pork and other unclean foods as a form of "antistructural" ritual that deliberately breaks taboos to align the participants with the dead temporarily, assuming their food and status, see Rüdiger Schmitt, "Care for Dead," in *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012) 459.

64. *Committing murder*: Alexander Rofé explicitly argues the phrase מכה שיא refers to violence, not killing, citing Isa 58:4 as a precedent ("Judean Sects in the Persian Period," in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* [ed. Ann Kort and Scott Morchauser; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985] 203–17, esp. pp. 210–11). Others construe this as a reference to murder or even to adult human sacrifice; for the latter, see, for example, Georg Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja* (3 vols.; Zürcher Bibelkommentare; Zürich: Zwingli, 1960–64) 3:273.

Breaking the neck of a dog: The suggested translation of the verb ערף as 'to immolate' by Rofé is not supported by extant usage in the biblical texts ("Judean Sects," 211); de Vaux's 'knock' (*assommer*) is feasible in light of the usage pattern, if construed as a means of applying enough force that would break the animal's neck ("Sacrifices de porcs," 263). The underlying rite being assumed here is ambiguous. Three options seem possible. (1) The breaking of a puppy's neck could have been part of a ritual sealing an alliance, as a long-lived Northwest Semitic practice. For details, see Jack Sasson, "Isaiah LXVI 3–4a," *VT* 26 (1976) 199–207, esp. pp. 202–4. This passage might even allude in some way to the "covenant with death" in Isa 28:14–22; for discussion of the possible background and meaning of that phrase, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Judah's Covenant with Death (Isaiah XXVIII 14 22)," *VT* 50 (2000) 472–83. Blenkinsopp concludes it is a deliberate parody of the Sinai covenant, but he has presented other options worth considering as well. (2) A second possibility is that the puppy was involved in a purificatory ritual, on analogy with other animals whose necks are broken in the Hebrew Bible; see, for example, Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001) 532. In this case, it could be linked with the purification undergone by the participants in the rite in 66:17. I do not agree with Zevit's decision to construe all the paired statements in v. 3 as elements in a single ritual that is being rejected by the author, though admittedly, the verse is very difficult to interpret (p. 534). (3) A final option is suggested by the pit construction found at Tell Mozan, Syria, which contained bones of piglets and puppies alongside those of sheep, goats, and donkeys, though the puppies had not been killed but left to die of starvation. Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati interpreted the pit as an *api*, an entrance to the underworld in Hittite tradition ("Ein hurritischer Gang in die Unterwelt," *MDOG* 134 [2002] 131–48). In a personal communication, Nick Wyatt has pointed out the relevance of KTU 1.16 i 2–3: "Like dogs shall we howl at your tomb, like whelps at the entrance to your burial chamber?" He suggests the howling of the dogs as they starved to death could have symbolized the mourning of the nation. For associations of dogs with various deities in the ancient world and their clean or unclean status, see Amir Sumaka'i Fink, "Why did

also declare or seek blessing within an “idolatrous” cult. It makes no mention of gardens in connection with any of the rites.

The activities specifically linked to gardens in these passages are ‘taking delight in / treasuring’ (root **חמד**) ‘mighty ones / archway pillars / rams’ (**אילים**) that presumably are located in the gardens chosen by the participants (1:29), the offering of sacrifice and possibly the burning of incense (65:3), and sanctification and purification before entering a garden “after one in the middle” (66:17). There is nothing that suggests mortuary cult practices specifically. Even the enigmatic phrase **בתוך אחד אחר**, or the variant form **בתוך אחת אחר** with the feminine singular form of “one” in 1QIsa^{a,b}, which is also the Qere in the MT, is open to multiple understandings. Suggestions include a priestess who stood in the center of those who were purified and sanctified, a representation of Asherah in the center, or a statue of Ishtar being carried in a procession as part of a rite in the cult of Tammuz-Adonis and presumably deposited in a central place among the group at the end.⁶⁵ Only the final option would have any overtones associating it with death rituals.⁶⁶ The activity in 65:3 has similarly been linked to a wide range of nonmortuary cultic contexts: the cult of Asherah performed in a cultic grove, a fertility cult of Ba‘al, worship at the ‘high places’ (*bāmôt*) more generally, and the cult of Adonis,⁶⁷ of which only

yrh play the dog? Dogs in RS 24.258 (=KTU 1.114) and 4QMMT,” *Aula Orientalis* 21 (2003) 35–61, esp. pp. 48–52.

Offering pig’s blood: There is no need to alter the MT text here to read **מדם** instead of **דם**, as does, for example, Rofé, “Judean Sects,” 211. The existing text is sensical.

65. *Priestess*: E.g., Fohrer, *Jesaja*, 3:277 (others imitate a “mystagogue” or “hierophant”); de Vaux, “Sacrifices de porcs,” 263 (a “mystagogue”); Westermann, *Jesaja* 40–66, 335; and Whybray, *Isaiah* 40–66, 288, who explicitly rejects the possibility that the statue of a goddess is meant.

Representation of Asherah: E.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2003) 311. This view was espoused in rabbinical commentaries according to John A. Emerton, but he rejected it because he felt that “fact” should have been stated plainly in the text and not alluded to obliquely (“Notes on Two Verses in Isaiah [26_{.16} and 66_{.17}],” in *Prophecy: Essays Presented to Georg Fohrer on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday 6 September 1980* [ed. John A. Emerton; BZAW 150; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980] 12–25, esp. p. 22). His development of a proposal by D. Winton Thomas that the entire phrase **בתוך אחד אחר** arose from vertical dittography in v. 16 is speculative, unnecessary, and would have had to have been an early error because the current phrase is present in all the versions.

Statue of Ishtar: E.g., Cheyne, *Prophecies of Isaiah*, 2:124–25. I have been unable to access Paul Volz and include his ideas reported by others about 66:17 and 65:3–5 detailing rites of a Hellenistic mystery cult (*Jesaja II* [KAT 9/2; Leipzig: Deichert, 1932]).

66. Two more options could be added to this list if a mortuary context were assumed for all the passages: (1) a dead male spirit or its representation in the form of a statue, or (2) a human, often female necromancer serving as the vessel used to convey the words of the dead to those participating in the rite.

67. *Cult of Asherah*: E.g., Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 186–90, who also links it with the more general condemnation of worship at the high places, such as those

the final option would have any connection with rituals involving death. It is only when Isa 65:4 is considered to be part of a single rite being condemned in all these passages that the possibility becomes seriously entertained that what is being recalled as inappropriate is some form of cult of the dead, necromancy, or ancestor veneration⁶⁸ taking place in garden spaces that contain tombs.

in n. 73; Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990) 83; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 270–71, 311.

Cult of Ba'al: E.g., John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC 25; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 343, referring back to his discussion of Isa 1:29 (John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* [WBC 24; Waco, TX: Word, 1985] 26).

Worship at the high places: E.g., Westermann, *Jesaja 40–66*, 318; R. Norman Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* (NCBC; London: Oliphants, 1975) 269.

Cult of Adonis: E.g., Thomas K. Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah: A New Translation with Commentary and Appendices* (2 vols.; London: Kegan Paul and Trench & Company, 1880–81) 2:123–25, even though he argued that 1:29 referred to the worship of Asherah (1:10). However, he links this activity with the reference in 17:10 to “pleasant plantations” that he interprets as an oblique reference to Adonis (1:104). So also Mark S. Smith, *Early History of God*, 158 n. 26, who likewise includes 17:10–11 as a further example; Brooks Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration* (JSOTSup 193; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 156.

68. *What is being condemned*: E.g., Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law* (JSOTSup 140; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 166–67; Zevit, *Religions of Israel*, 531–33; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 272; Stavrakopoulou, “Garden of Uzza,” 10; and idem, *Land of Our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims* (LHBOTS 473; London: Bloomsbury, 2012) 113–15; Schmitt, “Care for Dead,” 459.

Cult of the dead: E.g., Tropper, who points out that as of the late 1980s, he knew of no example in the ancient Near East of dream incubation rites conducted at tombs (*Nekromantie*, 326); by implication, Bloch-Smith, who notes that the deposit of charred pig bones in a cave burials 107 and 120 at Lachish tends to suggest that the reference to eating pig flesh in 65:4 is to a meal shared with the dead (*Judahite Burial*, 107); Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism*, 166–67 and 168–76 for a discussion of pigs used in cults of the dead; Stavrakopoulou, “Garden of Uzza,” 8–12; Schmitt, “Care for Dead,” 429–73, esp. p. 459.

Necromancy: E.g., Cheyne, who links v. 4 with Isa 8:19 and 29:4 (*Prophecies of Isaiah*, 2:113); Fohrer, *Buch Jesaja*, 3:260; Westermann, *Jesaja 40–66*, 318; Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 269; Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 343; Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 159–60; Ackerman, who thinks the passage is condemning incubation because of its ability to be addressed to dead spirits considered gods (*Under Every Green Tree*, 194–202); Smith, *Early History of God*, 128, 131; Schmidt, *Beneficent Dead*, 140, 260–61; Schramm, *Opponents*, 156, as one of two options; Jean-Marie Hussler, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World* (Biblical Seminar 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 176; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 271–72, which he associates with Isa 8:19; and Nicholas Wyatt, who argues this verse, as well as 1:29, involves royal necromancy specifically

There is thus no agreement as to whether the negatively assessed activities taking place in gardens in three or possibly four interrelated passages in Trito-Isaiah, 1:29–31, 65:3–5, 66:3, and 66:17, all are integral parts of a single rite or practice or a list of various “transgressions” associated with multiple forms of worship or practices. In the latter case, some could have taken place in one or more types of gardens, and some elsewhere. Unlike audiences in the later Persian and early Hellenistic periods, we lack the shared world view and social memory to be clear about the nature of the activities sketched briefly or perhaps even caricatured in Trito-Isaiah. There is widespread agreement that 65:4 is referring to some sort of practice involving the dead, either a form of dream incubation to receive a message from the occupants of the tombs where people slept overnight or a rite of necromancy conducted at the tomb.⁶⁹ Those who want to see a single rite or ritual to underlie 65:3–5 and 66:17 need to be able to explain how the various actions would be integral parts of that ceremony involving the dead and what the garden context contributes to an understanding of death and afterlife.

N. Wyatt has noted that Ugaritic text KTU 1.106.18–23, which details annual royal mortuary rites to be performed on the 8th day of the month of Gannu (‘Garden’) inside the royal palace complex, might be relevant for understanding the references to garden rites in Isa 65:3–5 and 66:17. Food offerings to be made include a l[u]ng, 14 ewes, 7 heifers, and an entire fish stew. Once it has been properly offered and presented in “the garden,” a response is expected to be given “in” or “from” the garden, which seems to refer to a reply from the dead kings and chthonic deities to an oracular enquiry. Then the king is to be desacralized, which indicates he had been sanctified before or during the rite.⁷⁰ It is unclear in the brief Ugaritic text if the king would partake of some of the

(“Royal Religion in Ancient Judah,” in *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* [ed. Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton; London: T. & T. Clark, 2010] 61–81, esp. pp. 74–75).

Ancestor veneration: E.g., Schramm, *Opponents*, 156, as one of two options. In contrast, Wolfgang Zwickel denies any connection with necromancy or dream incubation in v. 4, arguing it reflects instead the extreme misery and privation of some of the people, who were forced to live in the tombs (*Räucher kult und Räuchergeräte: Exegetische und archäologische Studien zum Räucheropfer im Alten Testament* [OBO 97; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990] 314–15).

69. For an alternate understanding, where the sleeping among or in the graves was a way that participants temporarily became like the dead, with no necromantic or oracular connection as part of a repeated commemorative rite, see Schmitt, “Care for Dead,” 459.

70. Nicolas Wyatt, “Degrees of Divinity: Some mythical and ritual aspects of West Semitic kingship,” *UF* 31 (1999) 853–87, esp. pp. 878–79. For a rich survey of various types of royal memorial rites in the ancient Near East and attitudes toward the divine status of dead kings, see William W. Hallo, “Royal Ancestor Worship in the Biblical World,” in *‘Sha’arei Talmon’*: *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near*

stew, for example, to symbolize his sharing a meal with his ancestors during the course of the rite or the time of day or night when the ritual took place. It can be assumed that there would have been a summoning of the dead and an invocation of selected names.⁷¹

Be that as it may, the site of the ritual is “the garden,” which, by implication, is located within the palace at Ugarit and is likely the setting of the royal burial chamber or hypogeum or part of the immediate adjoining space. According to G. del Olmo Lete, it probably took place in Court II adjacent to Room 28, which contained the royal tomb, in the northern zone of the palace.⁷² H. Niehr also suggests courtyard II might have been the site where meals were eaten in conjunction with rituals that involved the *hmn* platform in the adjoining space 38 to the east, where statues of the dead kings might have been temporarily placed during the rites and which contained a well; Room 39, which gave access to Room 28; and Room 28, which may have served as a *hšt* temple for underworld deities, where statues of netherworld deities may have been kept on the floor level above the tomb complex and a circular brick structure in an adjoining dromos.⁷³ Wyatt has argued, on analogy, that the king’s garden in the

East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon (ed. Michael Fishbane and Emmanuel Tov; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 381–401.

71. The ritual in KTU 1.161 includes a number of common elements with the annual *gan* rite, which suggests a routine mortuary ritual, even if the types and numbers of offerings might vary according to the specific occasion. It has been interpreted both as a funerary rite by, for example, Lewis, *Cults of Dead*, 5–46, 171; Dennis Pardee, “*Marziḥu*, Kispu, and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult: A Minimalist View,” in *Ugarit: Religion and Culture. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion, and Culture, Edinburgh, July 1994—Essays Presented in Honour of John C. L. Gibson* (ed. Nicolas Wyatt, Wilfred G. E. Watson, and Jeffery B. Lloyd; UBL 12; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 273–87, esp. p. 275, and as an element in a coronation rite. For the latter, see, e.g., Abraham Malamat, “Longevity: Biblical Concepts and Some Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” *Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft* 19 (1982) 215–23; Baruch A. Levine and Jean de Tarragon, “Dead Kings and Rephaim: The Patrons of the Ugaritic Dynasty,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104/4 (1984) 649–59, esp. pp. 653–55; Schmidt, *Beneficent Dead*, 103–20.

72. Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion: According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1999) 33, 224. He is followed by Nicolas Wyatt, “After Death has Us Parted: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in the Ancient Semitic World,” in *The Perfumes of Seven Tamarisks: Studies in Honour of Wilfred G. E. Watson* (ed. Gregorio del Olmo Lete, Nicolas Wyatt, and J. Vidal; AOAT 394; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag) 257–91, esp. p. 286.

73. Herbert Niehr, “The Royal Funeral in Syria,” *JNSL* 32/2 (2006) 1–24, esp. pp. 7–13; idem, “The topography of death in the royal palace of Ugarit: preliminary thoughts on the basis of archaeological and textual data,” in *Le royaume d'Ougarit de la Crète à l'Euphrate: Nouveaux axes de recherche: acts du Congrès international de Sherbrooke 2005* (ed. Jean-Marc Michaud; Collection Proche-Orient et littérature ougaritique; Sherbrooke: Éditions GGC, 2007) 219–42, esp. pp. 220–21, figs. 1 and 2.

Hebrew Bible is likely to have been a room in the palace complex in Jerusalem rather than, presumably, an outdoor garden with growing trees and plants in which the entrance to the burial chamber would have been located.⁷⁴ It can be noted that, while the tombs were inside the palaces at Qatna and Ugarit, at Kumi-di they were located in a separate building adjoining the palace proper, but still on its grounds,⁷⁵ so either option would be possible in an argument based on analogy. This raises a vital question concerning the nature of the tomb as a garden; was the hypogeum holding the bones of deceased kings considered a type of mythical garden space in some way, perhaps with the walls painted with trees and vines such as the garden scenes on the walls inside the temple? Did it effectively become a duplicate garden of Eden for the deceased kings who, having realized now their divine nature fully, joined YHWH in his heavenly palace and garden complex?⁷⁶

Wyatt cites another text from the mythological Ba'al cycle, KTU 1.5 vi 3–9, which could be relevant to the discussion. The dead Ba'al ends up in "Paradise," the land of pasture, in "Delight," the steppe by the shore of death, at the edge of the abyss.⁷⁷ This text allows the suggestion that dead kings might have been conceived to have resided in this same garden space. By extension, their burial ground would be referred to by the hoped for location of the dead in afterlife. How it relates to the more common concept of She'ol, the gated city of the dead at the source of the watery deep, is unclear.⁷⁸ The garden space entered by Ba'al upon his death appears to be the equivalent of the Greek

74. Wyatt, "Degrees of Divinity," 878–79. Zevit, on the other hand, favors the view that an urban garden space, vs. an orchard, was a royal prerogative (*Religions of Israel*, 514–15); Zorn suggests, in a similar vein but more specifically, burial in the palatial gardens, in imitation of Assyrian practice, although the parallels cited were not found specifically in garden spaces ("Burials of Judean Kings," 814–15). Stavrakopoulou sees this royal mortuary garden, reflected in Isa 65:35, 66:17 and identical with the garden of 'Uzza/Uzza', to be a space that was separate from the temple and the royal tomb, and seems to locate it, on analogy, in an interior court in the palace but declines to be specific about its location (Stavrakopoulou, "Garden of Uzza," 13–18; idem, *Land of Our Fathers*, 114). For a critique of the interpretation by Paolo Matthiae of three burials under the floor of three rooms in the palace at Ebla as evidence of a royal necropolis, and then an adjoining building ("Sanctuary B₂") as a site for the observance of royal mortuary cult, see Wayne T. Pitard, "Tombs and Offerings: Archaeological Data and Comparative Methodology in the Study of Death in Israel," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (ed. Barry M. Gittlen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002) 145–67, esp. pp. 155–63.

75. See Niehr, "Royal Funeral," 1–13.

76. This would not preclude such ceremonies invoking the dead taking place in an adjoining intramural physical garden space.

77. Wyatt, "Degrees of Divinity," 879.

78. For this conception of Sheol's location, see Jonah 2:6–7[5–6] and Job 38:16–18. It is implied in Ps 42:7–8[6–7].

Elysian fields, which, in older Greek tradition, were separate from the underworld of Hades and were reserved for mortals who had divine blood or ancestry and heroes. As thought evolved, admission was expanded to include the righteous and others chosen by the gods.⁷⁹

Ezek 32:17–32 could be seen to indicate that She'ol had different “residential” areas. The uncircumcised and those who died in battle ended up relegated to the less-desirable outer fringes of the city, while the fallen heroes of old who went down to She'ol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads and whose shields are upon their bones, are elsewhere, presumably in the more prestigious parts of the city (v. 27). If the “afterlife garden” were restricted in official Judahite thought to royalty, elite emulation might have widened its circle of eligible occupants in unofficial thought, particularly after the loss of native kingship.

The three passages in Isaiah are condemning practices of a portion of the people, not the king; the memory is targeted, in the first instance, at a small literate audience, who would have been officials for the most part and those most likely to have emulated former royal practices. Here, it must be borne in mind that belief in an afterlife was almost certainly accepted across the social spectrum of society and that the rites used to remember, to invoke, to seek the help of one's nondivine dead ancestors while preventing their return to disrupt the peace of the living and to transmit property to descendants may well have been similar in many respects, differing in their scale of offerings.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the use of the term *garden* in Isaiah to describe where the mortuary rites took place may well be an appropriation of specifically royal ideology;⁸¹ it is less

79. See, for example, William F. Jackson Knight, *Elysion: On Ancient Greek and Roman Beliefs concerning A Life after Death* (London: Rider & Company, 1970) 46–107; J. Edward Wright, *The Early History of Heaven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 112–14.

80. See Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, esp. pp. 171–81 for summary; Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burials*, 109–32; Hélène Nutkiewicz, *L'homme face à la mort au royaume de Juda: Rites, pratiques et représentations* (Paris: du Cerf, 2006, which I could not access); Stavrakopoulou, *Land of Our Fathers* and the bibliography of works cited; Wyatt, “After Death Has Us Parted,” 282–83; Schmitt, who, however, denies any function to guarantee inheritance of ancestral land (“Care for Dead,” 437, 472–73). Other texts in Isaiah that have been associated with mortuary cult, which do not mention a garden explicitly, include 8:16–20a; 19:3; 28:15; 29:4; 57:3–13a.

81. The depiction of all the foreign kings sitting on their thrones together in She'ol in Isa 14:9–11 allows for different understandings of a garden within the confines of She'ol or as a separate location from it altogether. It might be seen to confirm that there was a separate area for royalty within the larger city of She'ol, such as the acropolis of a city of the living, or to deny there was an acropolis in the city of the dead, so that kings become like everyone else upon death—weak and worm meat. A third option would be a denial that royalty ended up as strong beings in a separate, garden of delight after death that was separate from She'ol by asserting that, contrary to normal conventions,

likely to refer to planted gardens around entrances to tomb chambers located outside the walls of Jerusalem.

If Isa 65:3–5 and 66:17 reflect integral parts of a ritual that would have taken place in one or more mortuary “gardens” and not in one or more cultic gardens or groves dedicated to Asherah or to the worship of Tammuz-Adonis, then it is a minority memory about gardens more generally in the Hebrew Bible. In the first instance, it would evoke beliefs about afterlife and continuity with the dead via their feeding, invocation, and oracular consultation; in the case of the cult of Asherah, perhaps fertility and the sensual, sexual associations of gardens, and in the case of the cult of Adonis-Tammuz, death, life, fertility, and sexuality. In any event, it is likely that it is an integral part of the underlying thought complex concerning life, death, afterlife, and the geography of the universe in many references to water, life, death, trees, and vines in the biblical books, particularly in the psalms and prophetic literature. Thus, it serves in Isaiah as a strategy to use the past to model acceptable behavior for the present and future. The ancestors would have become a potential challenge to YHWH’s authority as the sole source of blessing, life and death in emerging monotheistic thought. By having their ritual maintenance and oracular consultation condemned by the monarchic-era prophet Isaiah, desired changes in the present, which would bring about discontinuity with the past, could be made more acceptable by claiming they are not innovations but practices or standards that already existed but were wrongly executed in the past, which must be rectified in the present and the future. If any former underlying royal ideology is specifically in mind here for changing, it likely would have been a rejection of the idea that dead Davidic kings became divine beings.⁸²

YHWH, the Divine Gardener

After reviewing the strong association of gardens with royalty in the Hebrew Bible and in light of the role of gardens in royal ideology across the ancient Near East, YHWH’s role as divine gardener is unsurprising. In an assumed understanding of the world where the king is the earthly vice-regent of the national patron god and where the divine and human realms mirror each other in

all end up together, regardless of status, as weakened worm meat in the city of the dead. These are foreign kings being depicted, which might allow an issue about native kingship to be raised indirectly. Would it have been assumed that all kings would end up in a privileged place, or just native kings?

82. For the tendency for royal dead to gain divine status in the wider ancient Near East, see Hallo, “Royal Ancestor Worship,” 388–89. Schmitt might well be correct that the dead were seen as preternatural beings worthy of veneration, but not divine or semidivine beings in ancient Judah and Yehud; however, royalty, as the link between heaven and earth in life, appear to have enjoyed divine status after death (“Care for Dead,” 433). For the likely divine status of Judean kings during life as well as in death, see Wyatt, “Royal Religion,” 70–71, 73–75.

structure and events taking place, it perhaps does not matter ultimately whether the king's gardening activities are thought to imitate the god's or whether the idea of "god as gardener" is a projection from human royal interests such that the god is conceived to imitate the king. Either way, the garden of Eden is envisioned very much as a royal garden adjoining YHWH's palace where he holds court and deliberates with the divine council (Gen 3:22; see also 2 Kgs 19:19; Jer 10:10). He strolls in the garden like a human king "at the time of the evening breeze" (3:8), presumably in order to be able to enjoy his created, planted space (2:8), which contained "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (2:9).⁸³ It is an irrigated garden (2:10). There is no mention of walls surrounding the garden, but royal gardens on palace grounds were often walled so it is likely this space was conceived in the same way, with the two cherub guards stationed at a single gate giving access to the garden and its central, forbidden tree (3:24).

T. Hiebert has noted how YHWH is presented in very human terms as a participant in and occupant of the human sphere in Genesis 3. He plants the garden (2:8; and makes it grow, 2:9), walks in it (3:8) and talks to its residents (3:8–9) whom he has fashioned from its soil (2:7).⁸⁴ One might add that those residents are his servants (2:15), and he, by implication, is their lord. He is presented as the divine farmer who oversees his earthly estate.⁸⁵ His evening strolls must have left from and returned to his main residence, which, although not specifically described, seems to be presumed. Logically, the residence was also inside the garden or adjoining it, on earth, rather than in heaven; he does not descend to take these walks.⁸⁶ The point might be moot; the story is set outside of normal historical time, in *illo tempore*, where the understanding that an earthly palace and temple would mirror a heavenly palace/temple can easily

83. In Mesopotamian literature, deities likewise enjoyed gardens as part of their temple complexes and possibly also royal gardens, which could contain shrines on their grounds; see, e.g., Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 1994) 134–36.

84. Theodore Hiebert, *The Yahwist's Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 64.

85. Hiebert, *Yahwist's Landscape*, 67.

86. In Ugaritic mythic tradition El can dwell in a tent at the source of the rivers. It might be possible to conceive of YHWH occupying a tent during his earthly garden visits, with a permanent palace in heaven because the text is not explicit, but it seems more likely that a palace with adjoining garden is the underlying conception. The cosmology here is expressed horizontally rather than vertically, radiating out from the center, the divine palace/temple on Zion, to the peripheries bounded by the streams forming the cosmic ocean. For a discussion of vertical and horizontal cosmology, see Nicolas Wyatt, "Sea and Desert: Symbolic Geography in West Semitic Thought," *UF* 19 (1987) 375–89, esp. pp. 377–81. For a fuller argument applied to Eden/Zion, see Nicolas Wyatt, "A Royal Garden: The Ideology of Eden," *SJOT* 28 (2014) 1–35.

merge and distinctions can become blurred,⁸⁷ as in Ps 11:4. YHWH's earthly garden is thus located in a different time than the earth familiar to the ancient readers, and in this hazy "other time," the implied divine palace on earth can double as the more familiar temple space in "this time."⁸⁸

Yahweh's chosen dwelling place on earth, his temple in Jerusalem, is remembered to have been decorated internally to resemble a garden, even if the specifics vary between the books of Kings and Chronicles.⁸⁹ In Kings, the nave walls are lined with wood paneling into which were carved gourds and opening lotus buds (1 Kgs 6:18); they also are remembered to have been decorated from the front to the rear with carved cherubim, palm trees, and budding blossoms (1 Kgs 6:29). The doors to the holy of holies and into the nave also contained

87. So pointed out by Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 286. Here, I differ on my understanding of the location of the garden, Eden; Stordalen considers it to be located in a divine realm that is the flip side of the human realm, like two sides of an amulet. He seems to locate Eden not on earth, though its cosmic streams descend and encircle the earthly realm, assuming a two-plane vertical cosmology, while I would locate it in Genesis 2–3 as the center of the earth's surface, assuming a horizontal cosmology. We agree it is a sacred space in either case. For a further statement of his understanding, see Terje Stordalen, "Heaven on Earth—Or Not? Jerusalem as Eden in Biblical Literature," in *Beyond Eden: The Biblical Story of Paradise (Genesis 2–3) and Its Reception History* (ed. Konrad Schmid and Christoph Riedweg; FAT 2/34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 28–57, esp. p. 43. Hiebert correctly wants to minimize the typical distinction drawn between "the primordial age" in Genesis 1–11 and the "historical" patriarchal age in the rest of Genesis. However, it seems the continuity is one that is better set outside of historical time, which only begins in the biblical story when the announced human life span of 90 years becomes the norm, which is with Moses's death and settlement in the Promised Land of Canaan. All of Genesis is set in the distant past (מקדם) when life was not as it came to be known and experienced by the audience, even if time passes linearly within it, the garden reflects the practices of rain-dependent agriculture in the hill-country of the southern Levant, and the concept of land and its centrality to future Israel is an ongoing theme (*Yahwist's Landscape*, 77–82, 97–104). For the likely temporal meaning of מקדם in Gen 2:8 rather than the commonly assumed geographical sense, see, e.g., Wyatt, "Supposing the Gardener," 24–25; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 261–70.

88. Space precludes a detailed treatment of the memory of the garden of Eden in Ezekiel 28 and the divine garden in Ezekiel 31. The first, which concerns the king of "Tyre," probably at one point was an oracle directed against the king of Jerusalem, where "Tyre" served as an allusion to the "rock," an expression used to describe YHWH (e.g., Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31; 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 22:3, 32, 47; 23:3; Isa 17:10; 26:4; 30:29; 44:8; 51:1; Hab 1:12; Ps 18:3[2], 32[31], 47[46], *passim*) and arguably, by extension, his temple complex on Zion in Jerusalem.

89. Nicolas Wyatt suggests that in Jerusalemite mythic tradition, the divine garden that marked the center of the earth would likely be located in the temenos of the temple, which may even have been called "the king's garden" (*Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* [UBL 13; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996] 357–69, esp. p. 367).

carved cherubim, palm trees, and budding blossoms (1 Kgs 6:32–35), overlaid with gold. In Chronicles, the garden imagery is recalled differently, as is the internal layout of the sanctuary. The nave is subdivided, with a restricted area; the walls of the entire space are covered with panels of cypress overlaid with gold that depicted palms and chains (2 Chr 3:5), and in the restricted section, gilded cherubim also appear on the walls (3:7). In both books, the temple vestibule was flanked by two pomegranate-bedecked pillars, Jachin and Boaz (1 Kgs 7:21; 2 Chr 3:21), which seem to be stylized trees.⁹⁰ The envisioned ideal temple in Ezekiel 40–42 also was to be decorated inside the nave, the holy of holies, and on the doors with the familiar elements of palm trees and cherubim. However, here a repeating pattern of palm trees flanked by cherubim (41:17–20, 23–25) was to be used, which might or might not have been how the decoration was remembered by the authors of Kings and Chronicles.⁹¹ Palm trees also were to flank recessed windows on either side of the interior of the future vestibule (Ezek 41:26). There was a relatively narrow iconographic range used symbolically to represent the YHWH's power of giving and sustaining life and providing fertile abundance.

In Mesopotamian culture, physical gardens were an integral part of temples, some of which also owned extensive adjoining agricultural estates. These would have been conceived to have been gardens owned by the deity.⁹² In

90. Edwin O. James, *The Tree of Life: An Archaeological Study* (SHR 11; Leiden: Brill, 1966) 37–38; Othmar Keel and Christophe Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Göttersymbole: neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen* (Quaestiones disputatae 134; Freiburg: Herder, 1992) 194–95; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 115, 122. For a summary of views about the temple's association with the garden of Eden through 2000, see conveniently, Stordalen, 307–10. For a succinct presentation of the parallels, see especially Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *"I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11* (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 4; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994) 399–404.

91. For the historical implications of these variations in decoration and layout, see my "What Can We Know about the Persian-Era Temple at Jerusalem?" in *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.)* (ed. Jens Kamlah; Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 41; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012) 343–68.

92. It is not clear how many ancient Near Eastern temples might have had gardens on their immediate grounds, outside the sanctuary proper. One suggested excavated example is the "house/palace/temple for celebration" (*Festhaus*) outside the city of Ashur, where holes were cut into bedrock in rows to plant bushes or trees both outside the building on its grounds and inside the main nave in front of the holy of holies (Walter Andrae, "Der kultische Garten," *Welt des Orients* 1 [1947–52] 485–94, esp. pp. 488–89). It predates 700 B.C.E. (p. 492). Dalley indicates the complex has since been identified as the temple of the New Year's Festival (*Mystery of Hanging Garden*, 156). Similarly, whether the outside courtyards of the temple complex in Jerusalem might have had any gardens is difficult to gauge; nothing is said about them in the text,

Mesopotamian mythic tradition, humans were created in order to work in the place of minor gods, which included the digging and clearing of canals so irrigated food-crops could be grown to feed the gods and which involved, more generally, work as farmers and herders (*Atrahasis* 93; *Enuma Elish* Tablet 6). A temple, therefore, represented a tangible divine estate on earth, which was overseen by the king, who, in Assyrian tradition, served as the priest of the god and also bore the titles “overseer/administrator of the gods.”⁹⁴ These temple estates traditionally were exempt from paying royal taxes-in-kind, which probably was due to the larger conception of temples as divine estates, whose produce was owned fully by their divine lords. Non-temple lands, while technically owned by the gods, were like land-grant estates given to humans; their owners were allowed to maintain a portion of the annual yield but also needed to pay a portion to the designated “revenue” agent of the divine land-owners, the king, who then, in theory, would “reinvest” it wisely, as he saw fit, on behalf of the gods, within the larger earthly domain he oversaw.⁹⁵

if they existed. Stordalen doubts they did but thinks the pillars on the portico in front of the sanctuary, together with Jachin and Boaz beside the main entrance, could have been perceived as a kind of stylized forest (*Echoes of Eden*, 121–22). Tuplin notes that in Greece, gardens were not considered to be cultic sites where one could experience an intimation of the divine (“Parks and Gardens,” 117). However, gardens would evoke education because philosophical schools were located in them (p. 127).

93. See conveniently, Alan R. Millard, “A New Babylonian ‘Genesis’ Story,” in *“I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood”: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11* (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 4; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994) 114–28, esp. pp. 118–19. For another text, dubbed the Eridu Genesis, which assigns already existing humans the task of building cities and cult-places where the god Ninur could cool himself in their shade and where divination could occur, see Thorkild Jacobsen, “The Eridu Genesis,” 129–42 in the same volume. For translations of the texts of *Atrahasis* and *Enuma Elish* with commentary, see conveniently, Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (rev. ed.; Oxford World’s Classics; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 1–38, 233–77. For English versions of the latter two texts that lack notes and commentary, see Benjamin R. Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1995) 9–77.

94. This concept could be expressed with various terms, especially *iššaku*, *šaknu*, or *uklu/waklum*. For the first two, see Machinist, “Kingship and Divinity,” 153–57. For the frequent use of the last title when a king made a royal land grant, see Laura Kataja and Robert M. Whiting, *Grants Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (State Archives of Assyria 12; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1995) 4–64. For the king of Judah as “servant of YHWH,” which would include the dual dimensions of performing cult as a priest and cultivating his estates as “farmer,” see Nicolas Wyatt, “When Adam Delved: The Meaning of Genesis iii 23,” *VT* 38 (1988) 117–22, esp. pp. 118–19.

95. For a very helpful discussion of the biblical understanding of land possession and usufruct, see Philippe Guillaume, *Land, Credit and Crisis: Agrarian Finance in the Hebrew Bible* (BibleWorld; Sheffield: Equinox, 2012) 9–27.

The Hebrew Bible is vague about any locations of possible temple-owned estates around Jerusalem or further afield in Judah. Nevertheless, the same idea of YHWH as owner of the territory of the land of Judah, as though it were his extended estate, seems to be presumed in the Deuteronomistic system for the paying of taxes to the temple in Jerusalem in the framework of three annual pilgrimage festivals (Deut 16:16–17; cf. 12:11) except every third year, when they were to remain in the countryside for the widow, the orphan, and the poor (14:28–29). It seems the priests and Levites were supported from these annual taxes as well (Deut 18:1–5). The memory that storage rooms flanked the Jerusalemite sanctuary space proper, running its length and across the back of the holy of holies and also were located elsewhere on the temple grounds (1 Kgs 6:5; 7:51; 1 Chr 26:15, 17, 22; 28:11–12; 2 Chr 5:1; Neh 12:25, 44, 47; 13:10–13) reinforces the notion that YHWH owned the land.⁹⁶ The author of Nehemiah seems to presume a slightly different system in which members of Israel paid some taxes in kind to the crown and others to the temple; the latter supported the priests and Levites officiating at the temple (Neh 12:44, 47; 13:10–13). Ultimately, however, it shares the underlying world view that YHWH was the direct owner of the land and the king was the overseer of his estates.

The idea of Jerusalem as YHWH's estate is reflected in three books that describe him as the city's divine "gardener." The root גנן (*g-n-n*) is used in 2 Kgs 19:34; 20:6; Isa 31:5; 37:35; and Zech 12:8 to describe how the deity will protect the city personally when it is threatened by foreign invaders. In Lam 2:6, on the other hand, YHWH deliberately 'acts violently' (חמס) toward Jerusalem, "his booth," as though ripping out a garden and letting the land convert back to uncultivated wilderness, which, as its owner and keeper, is his prerogative. These conceptions are the flip side of the same "divine gardener" coin. Isa 51:3 then promises that YHWH will once again resume his "gardening" duties in abandoned Zion; he will make its 'wilderness' (מדבר) like Eden and its 'desert' (ערכה) like his garden. Whether the author of Isaiah envisions YHWH to be signaling his intention to reoccupy his temple specifically, limiting the gardening activity to the temple mount, or to rehabilitate the entire city, his former estate, is perhaps less significant than his desire to have him "make good" on his former promises in 31:5 and 37:5 to protect and cultivate Jerusalem. The

96. Currently, there is no other known example of an Iron Age temple in the Near East with this architectural layout, contra Lawrence Stager's claim that it fits into a 300-year tradition of north Syrian architecture. He has inaccurately equated the side storage chambers in 1 Kgs 6:5 with a 16-foot wide corridor around three sides of the 9th-century temple at 'Ain Dara ("Jerusalem as Eden," *BAR* 26/3 [2000] 36–48, esp. pp. 46–47). These two features are functionally distinct. For additional reflections in the texts of YHWH's ownership of the land, see Norman C. Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Bernhard Lang, *The Hebrew God: Portrait of an Ancient Deity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002) 159–67.

memory being perpetuated in this book is one of YHWH as a temporary absentee landlord who, nevertheless, plans to resume personal residency and begin productive cultivation of his garden once again.

YHWH's role as gardener is extended from Jerusalem to the entire Promised Land in passages that describe Israel metaphorically as a vine that YHWH 'plants' (verb נָטַע) or 'transplants' (שָׁחַל) and sometimes threatens to 'uproot' (נָחַשׁ) from his "vineyard," or as a tree he plants or transplants but also cuts down.⁹⁷ Moving further afield, it is asserted he plants, transplants and uproots other nations on the earth besides his chosen people, Israel.⁹⁸ The concept of divine gardeners was part of the world view of the ancient Near East more widely.⁹⁹

The tradition of YHWH as gardener is expressed in four ways: as owner and occupier of the garden of Eden or in Eden, as protective "gardener" of Jerusalem, as (trans)-planter of Israel in the Promised Land, and as planter and uprooter of other nations in various parts of the earth. This evokes a world view in which the earth is the domain of the god and he desires occupied areas to be like well-kept, cultivated gardens. When the kings of Judah and other lands do their duty as his earthly overseers and ensure that their subjects work to their full productive capacity, the earth can become a veritable mirror of the ideal, heavenly garden and divine abode. Jerusalem, as YHWH's chosen earthly abode, is a special locale to him that he personally cares for as its gardener, perhaps with the understanding that the entire city is an extension of his temple grounds.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Gardens evoke a range of associations in biblical memory, even if none allow us to determine if physical gardens were an integral feature of intramural city space in Judah or Yehud. Consistent with their role in the larger Judean world view, they express abundance, fertility, and life provided by YHWH and his mediator and earthly overseer, the king. They must be tended and cared for, but the investment of labor is rewarded with life-sustaining food, herbs

97. *Plants*: Exod 15:17; 2 Sam 7:10; Isa 5:2, 7; Jer 2:21; 11:17; 12:2; 24:6; 32:41; 42:10; 45:4; Ezek 36:36; Amos 9:15; Ps 44:3[2]; 80:9[8]; 1 Chr 17:9. For Israel as grain, see Isa 40:24. For Israel as a tree, see Isa 6:13; 10:18–21; Jer 17:8; Hos 9:13; Ps 1:3; 92:14[13]. *Transplants*: Applied to vine imagery in Ezek 17:8, 10; 19:10, 13. *Uproots*: Deut 29:27[28]; 1 Kgs 14:15; Jer 12:14–15; 24:6; 31:28, 40; 42:10; 45:4; Ezek 19:12; Amos 9:15; 2 Chr 7:20.

98. Jer 12:14, 17; 18:9–10; Ps 9:7[6]; 44:3[2].

99. See Lang, who cites texts and iconography concerning weather-gods particularly but also associated with gods of springs and rivers (*Hebrew God*, 139–69).

100. For this understanding underlying the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, see Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach To Ezra–Nehemiah* (Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

for medicine, and pleasurable sensual stimulation. Every person's ideal is to be able to sit under his or her own fig tree and vine. Cultivated land represents order and cooperative work under the auspices of a governmental apparatus; uncultivated land represents chaos and the lack of governmental control. Citizens are servants of their king, who in turn, is the servant of YHWH. Dead kings may have had the privilege of enjoying eternal afterlife in a garden, which perhaps mirrors the divine garden, Eden.

Specific gardens create webs of meaning within the collection of biblical memories encoded in the various books. These all have royal or divine owners and involve both the living and the dead. The gardens of the Persian kings Xerxes and Artaxerxes evoke imperial power but also its excesses and its intrusive nature and presence in its conquered provinces. In contrast, the garden(s) of Solomon allow the second Davidic king to be remembered positively as though he were the equal of the two Persian kings, a true ruler of a vast empire, but without most of their negative qualities. Interestingly, the memory of his possession of a large harem links him to Xerxes as remembered in Esther; it also is a sign of imperial power. However, in Solomon's case, it is remembered to have led him astray by catering to his wives and to have abandoned YHWH and thus led to his downfall, whereas in Xerxes' case, the inclusion of the Jewish Esther and heeding her petitions prevented his downfall.

King Ahab's desire to establish a vegetable garden near his palace makes him a foil to Solomon but also aligns him with the negative traits of imperial kings. On the one hand, he is denied the status afforded Solomon, who also was the second in a famous dynastic line, of an imperial-style ruler with extensive royal gardens and so is belittled in Judean memory. On the other hand, his agreeing to abuse the justice that it was his duty to uphold as king and overseer of YHWH's earthly estates aligns him with the negative intrusive behavior that also involved a cavalier attitude toward the law on the part of the Persian king Xerxes.

The garden of 'Uzza' adds the dimension of death, burial, and afterlife to the associations evoked by gardens, as the remembered burial place of King Manasseh, King Amon, and in the LXX tradition, of King Jehoikim in a location different from earlier Davidic kings. It is possible that the mention of 'Uzza' would have drawn an association with the leprous King Uzziah in the minds of ancient audiences, which then would have reinforced a negative impression and assessment of these three kings through that association. It is also possible, however, that 'Uzza' would have been understood to be an oblique reference to King Hezekiah through the use of synonymous terms for strength—the "strong one" being an alias for "Yah has made strong." In this case, the reference to the garden of 'Uzza', the failure to present Hezekiah's burial place in the closing death, burial and succession notice, and the impossibly young age at which he would have been conceived by his alleged Davidic father would be a means of encoding a less overt memory that he was founder a new dynastic

line for discerning members of the audience. Not wanting to detract from the otherwise positive memory of this monarch, this was a way to allude to and so perpetuate another important dimension of his reign.

The garden of Eden, YHWH's garden, is remembered as though it were a royal garden adjoining a palace, reinforcing the shared understanding that the Davidic kings, YHWH's chosen line of overseers on earth, replicated the layout of the divine abode and its gardens in their earthly royal palaces and their accompanying grounds. As such, symbolically, the royal estate and its gardens represented, on a grand scale, the ideal for human existence: every human a productive farmer who can enjoy the fruits of his labor by sitting under his own fig tree and vine. Of course, ideologically, both ordinary men and the king would be workers on YHWH's earthly estates, but they could be conceived to be the beneficiaries of royal land grants, usually with tax obligations left intact. This, then, would make human estates big or small, secular reflections of "the garden of Eden on earth," which was made manifest religiously in the temple in Jerusalem, whose nave had walls decorated to create a symbolic garden space. There may also have been physical garden spaces in the outside courtyards of the temple complex.

The divine garden apparently also could be replicated in the "house," that is, tomb of dead kings and perhaps later on, high officials. It is likely that in the Judahite world view and continuing into the Judean one, as the divinely chosen stewards of YHWH's earthly estates who sat on his throne in life, at death, former kings enjoyed the privilege of eternal rest in a garden in the underworld that almost certainly would mirror the divine celestial garden. If Judah shared the custom of other northwest Semitic cultures of burying the royal dead in a hypogeum inside the palace, then the garden of 'Uzza' and the burial ground of the earlier line(s) of kings would have been inside the royal residence complex occupied during life, but perhaps, in different wings or rooms for different dynasties and bloodlines. The tomb chambers may have had their walls decorated symbolically as a garden, as did the temple; it is uncertain if the entrances to these underground tombs would have been set among plantings or not. Either way, it is likely that the decision to refer to royal tombs and subsequently perhaps, the tombs of officials who emulated former royal custom, as "gardens" went beyond the basic meaning of "enclosed space" to evoke specifically a planted, cultivated space. This, then, would have been a tangible way to express hope that in the afterlife, the same ideal of sitting under one's fig tree and vine would be possible in a section of the city of the Dead or a separate, upscale garden setting in the underworld, which would have replicated the divine garden of Eden.

In Defense of the City: Memories of Water in the Persian Period

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History, at least as usually understood in contemporary discourse, tends to separate the past from the present and focus on the unique, repeatable character of the past or the past event, whereas memory tends to construe a past that is presently alive in the community, to fuse past and present, and to shape the past in terms of a basic metanarrative/myth that is constantly reused.¹

Introduction

Many studies on the landscape of the ancient Near East focus on the manifestation and role of water. By means of archaeology and geography, scholars are able to reconstruct where and when water was available. The location of streams, canals, and cisterns allows them to make statements about the use of water and its importance to the city.²

Author's note: I would like to express my gratitude to Ehud Ben Zvi for inviting me to bridge the gap between my earlier language-based work on the polysemy of the word עַי 'eye/source' in the book of Genesis and its possible contribution to the analysis of memories of water in the Persian period.

1. Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Voice and Role of a Counterfactual Memory in the Construction of Exile and Return: Considering Jeremiah 40:7–12," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 169–88 (p. 172).

2. Michael Fishbane, "The Well of Living Water," in *Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (ed. Shemaryahu Talmon et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 3–16 (p. 4); Jon L. Berquist, "Spaces of Jerusalem," in *Constructions of Space*, vol. 2: *The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces* (ed. Jon Berquist and Claudia Van Camp; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008) 40–52 (p. 41); Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005); Andrew Vaughn and Ann Killebrew, *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (SBLSymS 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003). For comments on the definition and ancient conception of city, see Michael O'Connor, "The Biblical Notion of the City," in *The Biblical City and Other Important Spaces* (ed. Jon Berquist and Claudia Camp; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008) 18–39; Joyce Marcus and Jeremy

While archaeology can tell us about material details, it is unable to clarify what people thought of water and what connotations and memories it evoked. At the most, one can derive its high value from its scarcity.³ In order to answer questions about the people's image of water, about its perception and its role, linguistic and cultural memory studies are far more helpful. In particular, this essay will focus on the perception of water resources in the urbanized context of Persian-period Yehud as it is reflected in biblical texts. First, the semantics of water in Biblical Hebrew will be examined, followed by an overview of different attestations of water and water supplies in Persian-period texts. Second, I will focus on the memories evoked by the several attestations. Third, the role of water in these memories will be discussed. In conclusion, I will summarize the results of the analysis.

The Semantics of Water

Semantics of Water in Biblical Hebrew: A Lexical Approach

According to J. Fentress, "memory is structured by language"; therefore, this analysis will begin with a lexical study of the several lexemes for water in Biblical Hebrew as well as the (textual) context in which they are used.⁴

The neutral and most general term for water in Biblical Hebrew is the word מַיִם. It has cognates in several other ancient Near Eastern languages, such as Akkadian, Arabic, and Aramaic. Its usages include water from a spring or well, river water, and seawater, among others.⁵ BDB also distinguishes special and figurative uses of the word in which מַיִם is joined with other words and refers to entities other than water.⁶ While lexica categorize based on a literal versus applied and/or figurative sense of the word, they do not distinguish between natural uses of water and human-made or better, human controlled occurrences. BDB mentions water from springs and cisterns as one category and water in streams and canals as another.⁷ In light of the specific focus of this essay on city-related, domesticated uses of water in the biblical texts, I will use

Sabloff, introduction to *The Ancient City: New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World* (ed. Joyce Marcus and Jeremy Sabloff; Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2008) 3–26.

3. Gerald Klingbeil, "Water" in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. Katharine Sakerfeld et al.; 5 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–9) 5:818–21 (pp. 818–19).

4. James Fentress, *Social Memory: New Perspectives on the Past* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 7. See also Stéphanie Anthonioz, *L'eau, enjeux politiques et théologiques, de Sumer à la Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 10.

5. See BDB, 565 s.v. מַיִם; and HALOT 11:576–77 s.v. מַיִם.

6. Ibid. Entities referred to are urine and seminal fluid. Contrary to BDB, HALOT only discusses metaphorical uses of the word.

7. BDB 565.

the dichotomy between natural and domesticated throughout this contribution.⁸ It is noteworthy, however, that both types of water are covered by the general term מים.

Apart from the general term, in the Biblical Hebrew lexicon several other words exist that refer to water or water supplies. Among the natural types of water, one can distinguish between words for source or spring, that is, a local and spontaneous outburst of water; streams, that is, naturally evolved routes of water; and seas, that is, large naturally occurring areas of water. Domesticated forms of water make up a second group that includes wells and cisterns, that is, sources of water dug out by humans;⁹ canals, that is, humanly executed water routes; and pools or basins, that is, large areas of water created by human effort.¹⁰ Various Hebrew lexemes appear for each of the categories.¹¹ Some of them have very particular connotations, such as תהום 'primeval waters', and others are more broadly used and less specific, such as ים 'sea'.

The Water Lexicon Applied in Persian Period Texts

While a variety of lexical choices are available on the theoretical level, the frequency and combinations of specific words in the texts under research are rather limited. Before I elaborate these occurrences, let me first specify what I classify as "texts." The corpus of the current study consists of biblical texts traditionally understood as originating from the Persian period: the books of Chronicles, Ezra–Nehemiah, Trito-Isaiah, Psalms 120–34, and the prophetic

8. In this essay, the term *city* will refer to Jerusalem as the prototypical, urbanized area in Persian-period Yehud. This assumption does not entail claims concerning the actual size of the place but focuses instead on its functions (Oded Lipschits, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century BCE," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* [ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006] 19–52 [pp. 38–39]). Furthermore, a city should be understood in the light of O'Connor's observations that "all the Biblical Hebrew words usually rendered 'city' refer to the same semantic field, 'human settlement', but not to a particular subdivision of that semantic field found in particular other languages" ("Biblical Notion of the City," 25–26). The adjective *human* plays a decisive role in defining the city.

9. For a study of these two types of water sources in biblical memory, which includes uses throughout the Hebrew Bible, see Hadi Ghanous and Diana Edelman, "Cisterns and Wells in Biblical Memory," pp. 177–193 in this volume.

10. According to Klingbeil, domesticated forms of water are "part of the larger process of sedentarization of people." Control over water resources is a *sine qua non* in this process ("Water," 818). See also 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 for further water terminology and references, as well as these entriese in *OED*: "Source," 16:61; "River," 13:997; "Sea," 16:776; "Pit," 11:911; "Canal," 2:819; "Basin," 1:984.

11. On the distribution and occurrence, see Klingbeil, "Water," 818, as well as the appendix on p. 175, below.

books of Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi.¹² I deliberately limit my lexical search to these texts because they are representative for a reconstruction of the Yehudite memories about water in the Persian period. The memories themselves, in turn, form the basis of the community's reading of the rest of the repertoire available to them at that time.¹³ Although the present contribution will not discuss the influence of water memories on the reading of the entire Persian-period repertoire, for purposes of clarification, let me add a short example. In Genesis 1, God creates the seas and the land out of an indeterminate body of water. There is no human present at that time; there is only God and the primeval chaos in what resembles a mythic setting, such as can be found in various other creation stories of the area. The memory of water evoked by the story is one of divine power and the almost uncontrollable forces of nature. When the same text is reread in the Persian period, the concept of water at that time will affect the reading. If at that time, water is a human resource, the creation story will be less about the threat of flooding and will focus instead on how the power of water can be applied by and to the benefit of humans. The initially divine-centered story will shift to a more anthropocentric perspective that stresses the water's positive connotations.

That being said, the following observations can be made with regard to the lexical distribution of water terminology in the selected texts. Out of the 22 available lexemes for water, 11 are used in the corpus under research. Half

12. "Chronicles, Book of," *EncJud* 4:703; "Ezra-Nehemiah, Book of," *EncJud* 6:657; "Isaiah," *EncJud* 10:68–69; "Zechariah," *EncJud* 21:483–85; "Haggai," *EncJud* 8:222; "Malachi," *EncJud* 13:421–22.

13. For the notion of repertoire versus the focus on individual books, see Ehud Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) *passim*, as well as idem, "Towards an Integrative Study of the Production of Authoritative Books in Ancient Israel," in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2008) 15–28; and idem, "One Size Does Not Fit All: Observations on the Different Ways That Chronicles Dealt with the Authoritative Literature of Its Time," in *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 13–35, esp. pp. 13–18. This repertoire would have included large portions of what we consider today to be the Hebrew Bible: the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic historical books, the prophetic books, and most of the Psalms. The distinction made in the current contribution between Persian-period texts and older texts is artificial in a way, yet necessary. Older texts and books that were read and reread in the Persian period carry traces of different views on water. Later readers will bring their own concept of water to those texts when reading them, which then may alter the view. Taking the older texts into account would bias the reconstructed memory and ignore the complex textual history of the Hebrew Bible. A drawback to the suggested approach is that it brings up dating issues. Therefore, the corpus is rather minimal and does not include possible Persian-period texts such as Joel, Ecclesiastes, or the entire book of Psalms.

of them appear three times or less.¹⁴ Limitation by lexical choice is further elaborated on the contextual level, where natural vocabulary can nevertheless lead to a domesticated interpretation of water if the context suggests so. In what follows, I will first discuss attestations of the generic term, used for both natural and domesticated forms of water, and continue with the occurrences of the words referring specifically to domesticized water resources. In addition, I will take into account natural water that is cultivated.

Generic Term

The word מים, the general lexeme, appears 27 times in the corpus.¹⁵ In 1 Chr 11:17 David is said to long for some water from the cistern of Bethlehem. The water will be drawn by three of his soldiers from a known and domesticated type of resource that is secured by the enemy, the Philistines.¹⁶ Also in 2 Chr 32:3 and the following verses, the water mentioned is controlled by humans. The water from the springs and wadis will be stopped so that the enemy, in this case the Assyrians, cannot benefit from it. While the water as such is always a natural resource in essence, the emphasis is on its importance for the well-being of the city and humanity's role in achieving that. It is therefore cultivated.¹⁷

In Neh 3:26; 8:1, 3, 15; and 12:37, this idea is even more foregrounded. Water is used as part of the name of one of the gates of Jerusalem: the Water Gate. Archaeologists have located the gate in the east of the city, in the vicinity

14. For the words appearing in the corpus, see appendix, p. 175. Additional water vocabulary that does not appear includes גב, באר, גבא, מבך, נבך, מבכו, תעלה, צנור, מכל, צנור, תעלה, מבכו, נבך, מבך, גבא, באר, גב, מוקה, צולה, מקה.

15. Neh 4:17 is omitted from the discussion because of its unclear Hebrew, which prevents firm conclusions with regard to the domesticated state of the water. Some interpretations support a reading of ימין 'right hand' instead of מים 'water', while the absence of any reference to water in the LXX text raises questions about its originality. Therefore, Neh 4:17 will not be included in the texts analyzed.

16. 1 Chr 11:17–19: ויתאו דויד ויאמר מי ישקני מים מבור בית לחם אשר בשער ויבקעו השלשה במחנה פלשתים וישאבו מים מבור בת לחם אשר בשער וישאו ויבאו אל דויד ולא אבה דויד לשתותם וינסך אתם ליהוה ויאמר חלילה לי מאלהי מעשות זאת הדם האנשים האלה 'And David longed and said, "If only I could get to drink some of the water from the cistern of Bethlehem, which is by the gate." And the three broke through the Philistine camp and drew water from the cistern of Bethlehem, which is by the gate, and they carried it back to David. But David would not drink it, and he poured it out as a libation to YHWH. And he said, "God forbid that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men who risked their lives?" for they had brought it at the risk of their lives, and he would not drink it. Thus did the three warriors'.

17. Fishbane notes that "if open wells repeatedly serve in biblical texts as a metonymy for sustenance and life, their stoppage signals mortal danger and death" ("Well of Living Water," 4). For the complete passage, see 2 Chr 32:2–30.

of the Gihon spring; hence, its name.¹⁸ Naming the gate the “Water Gate” is an act of cultivating the natural commodity and making it part of the city, the material expression of culture *par excellence*. The gate itself is by no means a natural product; it is a human-made structure.¹⁹

Similarly, the use of water in similes and metaphors shows a close connection between water and culture. In Isa 58:11 the people are compared to “a watered garden” and “a spring whose waters do not fail.” In these expressions, the people equal the water. Moreover, the water is specified as abundant and always present. As a consequence, the community controls the commodity.²⁰ When the water metaphorically represents the enemy, the coin is flipped. Instead of good things, the water now represents evil powers and is a resource harming the community. An example can be found in Ps 124:4–5, in which the waters stand for the uncontrollable opponent and depict a city overpowered by others.²¹

Human influence can also be found in passages in which water, often accompanied by bread, is used as a means of negotiation, such as Ezra 10:6, where Ezra ‘ate no bread and drank no water, for he was in mourning over the trespass of those who had returned from exile’, הגולה מעל על מתאבל כי שטה, לא ומים אכל לא לחם.²²

The only exceptions to the recurring topic of domesticated water are passages in which God plays a prominent role, such as in Nehemiah 9.²³ Retelling

18. David Ussishkin, “The Borders and *De Facto* Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 147–66 (pp. 148–52); Hugh Williamson, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985) 189. According to James R. Strange, the Water Gate mentioned in Nehemiah can be understood as the temple precincts, based on parallel accounts in 1 Esdr 9:38–41 (“Water Gate,” in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* [ed. Katharine Sakerfeld et al.; 5 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–9] 5:822).

19. On the role of names in the ancient world, see Karen Radner, *Die Macht des Namens: Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung* (Santag 8; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

20. See also 1 Chr 14:11, which says that God burst out against the enemies by the hands of the psalmist, as waters burst out. Thus, humanity is in control with divine help.

21. See also the simile in Isa 57:20, in which the wicked are compared to the uncontrollable water of the sea. In addition, the simile of Isa 64:1 can be mentioned, in which the enemy is also described as water. In this case, however, God is interfering on behalf of the people as fire that overpowers the water.

22. Similar settings of negotiation appear in 2 Chr 18:26, in which Micaiah is given a minimal amount of water and bread until the king comes back alive from battle, and in Neh 13:2, in which the Ammonites and Moabites are accused of having not met the people of Israel with bread and water. Likewise, the lack of water in the cistern of Zech 9:11 appears in a context of negotiation in which the deprivation of water creates a prison for the enemy.

23. Neh 9:11, 15, 20. See also Isa 63:12, in which a reference to the same wilderness episode appears, as well as Zech 14:8, in which an apocalyptic view of the future city is given, a city God will provide with ample water.

the events in the desert, humanity is but the recipient of the water, while God is the one controlling it. I will leave open for discussion whether this makes water a divine commodity in this instance, being neither natural nor human, but nevertheless, a domesticated form. The latter implies that it is the end result that matters: water can be acquired by humanity through the medium of God.

Lexemes for Domesticated Water

Besides the general lexeme מים, the following two words for domesticated water can be found in the selected corpus: בור and ברכה.²⁴ The word בור appears six times. The instances in 1 Chronicles 11 combine בור with מים and render the water in these verses as domesticated, as discussed before. In 2 Chr 26:10 cisterns are mentioned as one of the achievements of king Uzziah.²⁵ Just like in other ancient Near Eastern texts, great deeds are attributed to great kings, such as victory in war, innovative techniques, and building activity. Because listing these activities serves to emphasize the vigor of the leader, cisterns in this sort of context must be dug and exploited by the king (or on his order).²⁶ Neh 9:25 mentions a cistern in a list of things possessed by humans, such as houses, vineyards, olive trees, and fruit trees. All of them have to do with a cultivation of the natural environment and an attempt to control that setting.²⁷

The word ברכה appears three times. It refers to artificial, human-made pools, such as the King's pool in Neh 2:14 and 3:15–16.²⁸ The other lexemes used for domesticated resources of water do not appear in the corpus.

24. HALOT 1:116 s.v. 1:161; בור s.v. ברכה. For appearances, see appendix, p. 175.

25. 2 Chr 26:9–10: ויבן עזיהו מגדלים בירושלם על שער הפנה ועל שער הגיא ועל המקצוע ויהזקם ויבן מגדלים במדבר ויחצב ברות רבים 'And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem on the corner gate and the valley gate and the angle, and he fortified them. He built towers in the desert and he dug out many cisterns'.

26. Water works are often mentioned in royal inscriptions as proof of a king's qualities as leader (Anthonioz, *L'eau, enjeux politiques et théologiques*, 471–536).

27. Nehemiah 9:25: וילכדו ערים בצורות ואדמה שמנה ויירשו בתים מלאים כל טוב ברות 'and they captured fortified cities and fertile land and they took possession of houses full of all the good, of hewn pits, vineyards, olive trees, and fruit trees in abundance'.

28. In addition to the domesticated reading of ברכה, a positive connotation is evoked by exploring the aural and visual connection between the different readings of the consonantal form. An interesting verse in that respect is Neh 13:2, in which the word מים is used in combination with לחם 'bread', and the word ברכה appears after קללה. The word pairs work separately as well as in combination. In the former case, ברכה refers to a blessing as opposed to a curse. In the latter case, the word is linked with מים, evoking the meaning 'pool'. Notice that the word לחם will conform its meaning to that of קללה in a similar way, reading 'strife' rather than 'bread'. A comparable play exists between other water vocabulary (outside the selected corpus, however), such as the words *mikveh* and *mikvā*, both readings of the consonantal form מקוה. Again, the positive added value of water is stressed in this combination. Another ambiguous pair is formed by *gab* and *geb*, readings of גב. In all these examples, language seems to support a connection between water and its positive qualities. This connection has been

Lexemes of Natural Water Tamed

Before I draw a preliminary conclusion about the use of water in the texts under analysis, I will turn to the appearance and frequency of terms understood as natural types of water. As indicated above, context often delimits the interpretation of a water term. It is striking that the majority of the 72 instances of words referring to natural sources of water can be classified as domesticated forms of water by context.²⁹

Humans control springs. The word עֵיִן appears five times, once as a name in 1 Chr 4:32, once in 2 Chr 32:3, and three times in Nehemiah (2:14, 3:15, and 12:37). While semantically the term refers to a spontaneous manifestation of water without human intervention, the word is used in a cultivated sense in the corpus.³⁰ By naming the town in 1 Chronicles 4 'Ain, the author connects the spring with human activity. Whatever is given a name can be known and, consequently, can be controlled.³¹ The reference in 2 Chr 32:3 similarly emphasizes human intervention. Hezekiah and his officials decide to stop the flowing of the spring to prevent others from using it. They take control over the water to safeguard the city against the enemy.³² This is also the case in Nehemiah. The source is connected thrice with שַׁעַר 'gate', making up the word group שַׁעַר הָעֵיִן 'Spring Gate'. In this combination, the core word is *gate*, a human construction, on which the word *spring* is dependent.³³

The word מַעְיִן appears once in the corpus in 2 Chr 32:4, to talk about sources that are covered up. While the source appears to be natural here, the action of stopping its flow is a clear attempt by humans to control the water resource.³⁴

In Zech 13:1, מִקְוֶה is connected with human activity. The Israelites use the fountain to purge and cleanse. Here, it is less clear whether the source becomes a human commodity or not. However, it is only mentioned in its capacity to aid the community in worshipping its God, who is connected to the temple situated within the city.³⁵

discussed on a more general level by Klingbeil, not taking into account the linguistic peculiarities mentioned here ("Water," 818).

29. For appearances, see the appendix, p. 175.

30. HALOT 11:817–20 s.v. עֵיִן.

31. Radner, *Macht des Namens*, 16–19, 37–38; John Joseph, "The 'Language Myth' Myth: Roy Harris's Red Herrings," in *Linguistics Inside Out: Roy Harris and His Critics* (ed. George Wolf and Nigel Love; Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 148; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1997) 9–41 (pp. 14–15); Roy Harris, "From an Integral Point of View," in *ibid.*, 229–310 (pp. 259–60).

32. 2 Chr 32:3–4: לָמָּה יָבוֹאוּ מַלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר וּמִצְאוּ מֵיִם רַבִּים 'for otherwise the kings of Ashur would come and find plenty of water'.

33. Neh 2:14; 3:15; 12:37.

34. See n. 32.

35. Zech 13:1: בְּיוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה מִקְוֶה נִפְתָּח לְבֵית דָּוִד וּלְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לְחַטָּאת וּלְנֹדָה 'on that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for purging and cleansing'.

The words for 'stream', נהר and נחל, are used 29 times. The instances can be subdivided into three groups: (names of) locations, epithets, and similes. In Ezra 8:31, 36, as well as Neh 2:7, 9, and 3:7, the province of 'Beyond the River', פְּחוֹת עֵבֶר הַנָּהָר, is mentioned. This expression is used to locate the place, perhaps even name it, as some translations suggest, by rendering the phrase with capital letters. In that case, these examples are a metalinguistic domestication of water, as is argued for שַׁעַר הָעֵינַן as well.³⁶

Closely connected to the naming of locations is the use of נהר or נחל as a denominator in names, such as in נהר פרת in 1 Chr 5:9 or נחל קדרון in 2 Chr 15:16. The words function as epithets in passages that mention the location of places of worship, encampment, battle, or the like.³⁷ Whereas these rivers were located outside the city, they are often used in relation to it. When the altars and incense stands in 2 Chr 30:14 are removed and thrown into Wadi Kidron, the seasonal river helps preserve the city by carrying away the symbols of idolatry. Even when the riverbed would have been dry, the possibility of water flowing at some times of the year would suggest this function of removal and cleansing.

A third group uses the words in a simile. In Isa 59:19, God is the one compared to a stream, while in Isa 66:12 it is prosperity and the wealth of nations that form the referents of the streams. God is directing the stream or is the stream; humanity is the beneficiary.³⁸ These examples can be considered ambiguous because the relation between God and the community determines whether the latter will have access to the water or not.

The previously mentioned passage in 2 Chr 32:4 forms an exception to these three categories. Here, the water of springs and streams is stopped up as part of a war strategy. This is a clear example of the domestication of the resource.³⁹

36. John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2007) 188; Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (ed. John Thompson; Cambridge: Polity, 1991) 105. See also 1 Chr 1:48, רַחֲבוֹת, and 1 Chr 11:32, גְּהִלֵי גֶעֶשׁ, for similar examples. For water locations that are not part of a proper name, see Zech 9:10, וּמִנְהַר עַד אַפְסֵי אֶרֶץ 'from river to land's end'; 2 Chr 20:16, בְּסוֹף הַנָּחַל, 'at the end of the wadi'; 2 Chr 33:14, בְּנַחַל וּלְבוֹא בְּשַׁעַר הַדָּגִים, 'in the wadi on the way to the Fish Gate'; Neh 2:15, וָאֵנִי עָלָה בְּנַחַל לַיְלָה, 'I went up the wadi at night'; and Isa 57:5, שַׁחֲטֵי הַיְלָדִים בְּנַחֲלִים, 'who slaughter children in the wadis'.

37. More examples can be found in 1 Chr 5:9 as well as in 1 Chr 18:3 and 2 Chr 9:26, נהר פרת 'the river Euphrates'; 1 Chr 5:26, נהר גוזן 'the river Gozan'; Ezra 8:21, 31, הַנָּהָר הַבָּא אֶל אַחָוָה, 'the Ahava river' (slightly different in Ezra 8:15, הַנָּהָר הַבָּא אֶל אַחָוָה, 'the river that enters Ahava'); 2 Chr 7:8, נחל מצרים 'the wadi of Egypt'; 2 Chr 15:16, 29:16, 30:14, נחל קדרון 'Wadi Kidron.' On the role of streams as frontiers of the city and sources of conflict, see also Anthonioz, *L'eau, enjeux politiques et théologiques*, 41.

38. Also, we can mention Ps 124:4, which uses a metaphor instead of a simile. The water represents the enemies and God has kept the people from being overthrown by it.

39. See p. 161 above.

The sea vocabulary (29 attestations) shows a preference for the domesticated use of water as well. In 2 Chr 4:2–15, the word ים is used as a metaphor for the large basin of an altar made out of cast metal. As such, the sea in these examples is made by human hands.⁴⁰ Moreover, this altar is located in the temple, itself set within the city. Other instances, such as Ezra 3:7, discuss the sea as a means of transport. Food, drink, oil, and wood are brought by sea to or from the city.⁴¹ As in the case of the rivers, some attestations denote locations, such as 2 Chr 20:2.⁴² In comparison with the previous lexemes, a divine connection is more frequent. God is both said to create the sea and to split it so the people can pass through it.⁴³ In these instances, it is less clear whether the water is in human hands yet.

This brings me to a first concluding observation regarding the use of water references in the Persian-period corpus. The semantic field of water primarily covers domesticated types of water. Even lexemes that are normally considered natural forms of water are often used in a cultivated sense.

Water and Memory

Until now, the analysis has focused on the semantics of water and its use in relation to the city. I shall now turn to the insights of cultural (memory) studies to explore the memories evoked by the use of water terminology. The corpus will be considered one of the “forms in which the past presents itself to us.”⁴⁴ This form does not necessarily have to match history. Furthermore, the city as a space will be addressed in light of the comment by M. George that “space is a complex social phenomenon, one that involves not only physical space, but also the conceptual systems created and employed to organize it, and the symbolic and mythological meanings societies develop in order to live in space.”⁴⁵

40. 2 Chr 4:2, 3, 4 (twice), 6, 10, 15. A similar metaphor occurs in 1 Chr 18:8, where David takes a vast amount of copper, a sea, from which Solomon makes the tank, columns, and vessels.

41. See also 2 Chr 2:15, ‘we will cut trees of Lebanon, as many as you need, and we will bring them to you as rafts by sea to Jaffa and you will bring them up to Jerusalem’, ואנחנו נכרת עצים מן הלבנון ככל צרכך ונביאם לך רפסדות על ים יפו ואתה תעלה אתם ירושלים. See also 2 Chr 8:18 (crew of expert seamen), Zech 9:4 (power of Tyre as sea nation), and Isa 60:5 (wealth of sea to humans).

42. See also 2 Chr 8:17; Neh 9:9; Zech 9:10 (twice), 14:8 (twice), 10:11 (twice).

43. Hag 2:6 and Neh 9:6 mention the sea as a divine creation, whereas the sea is referred to in relation to the wilderness in Neh 9:11 (twice) and Isa 63:11, 13. Other passages to mention are Zech 14:4, where God has a battle near Jerusalem with the nations; 1 Chr 16:32, where it is said that the seas should worship God; and Zech 1:8, with a dream image of the sea.

44. Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006) ix.

45. Mark George, “Space and History: Siting Critical Space for Biblical Studies,”

It is these nonphysical forms that I will further discuss. A closer look at the different water appearances allows distinguishing three types of memories: memories of an undestroyed Jerusalem, images of the Davidic monarchy, and memories of the wilderness tradition.

Memories of an Undestroyed Jerusalem

References to an undestroyed Jerusalem appear especially in the book of Nehemiah. In Neh 2:5, the prophet asks to be sent to Judah to rebuild the city of his ancestors. In what follows, the reconstruction of the city is described as an act of repairing the former walls and gates, among other things.⁴⁶ Some of the gates bear water-related names, such as the Water Gate and the Fountain Gate. Thus, water is mentioned twice in connection with the city: as a resource and as part of the fortification structure.⁴⁷

Similarly, the passages in 2 Chronicles 32 relive the days before the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, the Assyrian king. The city will cut its outer water resources in order to protect them from being used by the enemy.⁴⁸ Again, the safety and integrity of the city is characterized by its control over water.

Whereas most references evoke memories of a past Jerusalem as a model for the present, Zech 14:8 projects the memories to the future. Fresh water will flow from Jerusalem, prominently placing the city in the middle of a larger constellation.⁴⁹

in *Constructions of Space*, vol. 1: *Theory, Geography and Narrative* (ed. Jon Berquist and Claudia Camp; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007) 15–31 (p. 29).

46. The historical picture might have slightly differed or at least raises some questions. Mary Joan Winn Leith notes that the Persians did not allow the construction of walls in Levantine cities, “probably considering them symbolic of civil independence.” The building of Nehemiah’s wall was rather exceptional and can perhaps be explained in terms of loyalty or external threats that resulted in Jerusalem’s privileged position (“Israel among the Nations: The Persian Period,” in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* [ed. Michael Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998] 276–316 [p. 309]). David Ussishkin engages in the discussion on the size of Jerusalem in the Persian period. In his view, the textual evidence may mention the restoration of the old walls; however, archaeological findings show that only part of this area was actually inhabited (Ussishkin, “Borders of Jerusalem,” 147–66). Lester Grabbe takes it a step further and wonders whether “Jerusalem even had a wall” (“Was Jerusalem a Persian Fortress?” in *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter R. Ackroyd* [ed. Gary Knoppers, Lester Grabbe, and Deidre Fulton; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2009] 128–37 [p. 135]).

47. Ussishkin, “Borders of Jerusalem,” 148.

48. *Ibid.*, 150.

49. The hope of rebuilding ties into the concept of utopian literature as interpreted by Louis Marin and Darko Suvin: “Utopias depict the world ‘as it should be’ not ‘why it is the way it is.’ In other words, utopias are not works of legitimation (providing a ground for the present reality), but works of innovation (suggesting a reality that could be, if its parameters were accepted).” See Steven Schweitzer, “Exploring the Utopian

Thus, the memory evoked by the text is a Jerusalem before destruction. The memory stresses the continuity between past and present by imagining the past Jerusalem in the present day; it is inclusive, “a reconstruction of the past in which the old and the new are melded together into a complex whole, even as disharmonies persist between old memoirs and their revisions.”⁵⁰ In a rare passage, this view is extended to the future as well. In this complete Jerusalem, water—a necessity for humanity—is linked with the city. As a result, the city as a conceptual whole becomes essential to the people. The memory emphasizes Jerusalem’s role as source and center of the Yehudite identity forming a point of orientation and endorses the standpoint that “Jerusalem is the center of the world.”⁵¹

Memories of the Davidic Monarchy

A second group of memories is formed by verses relating to episodes of the Davidic monarchy. In 1 Chr 11:17–18, David decides not to drink the water brought to him. Instead, he pours it as a libation to God. Following his example, his son Solomon controls a different kind of sea made of bronze, which serves as a basin for the priests to perform ablutions (2 Chronicles 4). According to 1 Chr 18:8, David had provided the mass of bronze. In other places, such as 2 Chr 32:5 and 33:14, David is implicitly remembered through mention of the city of David. In all instances, David is recalled as a wise king acting consciously when it comes to water. Water is important to the city; therefore, it must be protected and valued. Even when used metaphorically, it is kept under control and within the city’s boundaries. Inevitably, the memory of the Davidic monarchy calls to mind an undestroyed Jerusalem, because “the origins of Jerusalem are closely interwoven with the story of David’s power.”⁵²

Space of Chronicles: Some Spatial Anomalies,” in *Theory, Geography and Narrative* (ed. Jon Berquist and Claudia Camp; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007) 141–56 (p. 142).

50. Ronald Hendel, “Cultural Memory,” in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods* (ed. Ronald Hendel; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 28–46 (p. 29). See also Leith, “Israel among the Nations,” 287.

51. O’Connor, “Biblical Notion of the City,” 32. For the relation between the community (its well-being) and its home place, see also Leith, “Israel among the Nations,” 296; O’Connor, “Biblical Notion of the City,” 23–25; and Berquist, “Spaces of Jerusalem,” 40–46.

52. Ibid., 41. He applies Soja’s spatial theories to explain the roles of Jerusalem; he particularly links Secondspace (“symbols, meanings, and narratives about space”) and Thirdspace (“use of space”) with David. By transforming Jerusalem into the City of David, the king matches the Secondspace symbolism to his own agenda, a Thirdspace act. The theory shows that David and the city are connected at several levels. Consequently, this connection will establish a correlation in the memory evoked by the use of the narratives (“Spaces of Jerusalem,” 40–52). See also O’Connor and his comment on the royal-ritual city (“Biblical Notion of City,” 32).

Memories of the Wilderness Tradition

The wilderness tradition is a third and final memory that recurs several times in water references in the selected corpus. Nehemiah 9 describes how God gave his people drink in the desert.⁵³ The community is reminded of times when water was not freely at their disposal and the city only existed in terms of community, not as physical location. Other passages recount God's act of dividing the waters of the sea, such as Isa 63:12.⁵⁴ Again, water plays a crucial role in saving the community. Unlike in the memories of David, it is God who plays the leading part. However, the water is directed to the people and is not kept within the divine realm, as would be the case, for example, in memories of the creation (of the sea).⁵⁵ Some instances evoke the wilderness tradition by means of elements typical of that tradition, such as the 'desert' (מדבר), the 'Nile' (יאר), 'Egypt' (מצרים), or the 'teaching of Moses' (ספר תורת משה).⁵⁶

The memory of the wilderness is connected with the previous two memories, particularly by means of its belief that God will take care of his people. In the memory of the wilderness, this care stands specifically for God guiding Moses and the people through the wilderness and providing them with what they need. With regard to the other two memories, the belief in a caring God feeds the memory of an undestroyed Jerusalem that lies in the past but which may be back in the future. As for the past Jerusalem, here the memory of David surfaces as well.

It is clear that in this combination of memories evoked by water references, the metaphorical meaning of water—omitted until now—plays a role as well.

53. Neh 9:11, 15, 20. Ehud Ben Zvi has pointed to the association that existed between the Babylonian exile, on the one hand, and the exodus from Egypt, on the other hand. Therefore, the predominance of wilderness memories should not come as a surprise in the given corpus ("Voice and Role of a Counterfactual Memory," 172).

54. See also Isa 63:11; Neh 9:11; Isa 63:13; Neh 9:9.

55. On remembering and retelling the creation of Genesis 1, see Mark Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010) 11–37; Ehud Ben Zvi, "Thinking of Water in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Judah: An Exploration," in *Thinking of Water in the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period in Judah* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW; Berlin: de Gruyter, forthcoming). On the relation between the Exodus memory and the role of the divine, see idem, "Voice and Role of Counterfactual Memory," 173: "the concept of secure life in the land and full access to the fulfilled potential of its agrarian gifts is ideologically associated with that of proper relationship between YHWH and Israel. Thus, exile stands for partial estrangement between the two."

56. For מדבר, see 1 Chr 5:9; 2 Chr 20:16; Ps 124:4 (the flood goes over the people instead of dividing); Isa 63:13; 2 Chr 26:10. For mentions of the Nile or Egypt, see Zech 10:11 (twice); Neh 9:9; 2 Chr 7:8; and for the teaching of Moses, see Neh 8:3; 13:2; Ezra 10:6.

In the book of Jeremiah, God is called living water and the fountain of life (Jer 2:13 and 17:13).⁵⁷ It is not coincidental that memories of water are connected with Jerusalem, God's earthly dwelling; David, one of God's most famous servants; and the wilderness, the place where God renewed his covenant with his people and gave them the Torah. Nevertheless, most of the water references play within a human framework and are connected to the community's perspective. In those instances, there is no metaphorical reading intended. As for the wilderness memory, it seems to justify the new position of the people in an urbanized context rather than wanting to relive that past time. It is a strong defense for incorporating God within the city's conception. The temple and its water recall the divine contribution to the community's well-being and its validity even in more anthropocentric times.⁵⁸

To conclude this part, one can argue that the memories evoked by water are memories of the past bringing to mind the old Jerusalem, David, and the wilderness. This past plays a role in forming a communal identity in the present.⁵⁹ The memories negotiate between what was and what is. Taking into account the emphasis on domesticated forms of water, the community creates an image of a city with secure water resources and a leader taking care of them. Water within the city secures the community's welfare both physically and spiritually.

The Role of Water

While I have already touched on the role of water evoked in the textual memories under examination, I would like to elaborate this point a little further. Terms such as *control*, *protection*, and *domestication* have been used throughout the argument. They describe what kind of function water fulfills for the community: it is a kind of weapon and a means of power.⁶⁰ Overall, three

57. Fishbane, "Well of Living Water," 5; Ben Zvi, "Thinking of Water."

58. Christine Mitchell, "'How Lonely Sits the City': Identity and the Creation of History," in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period* (ed. Jon L. Berquist; Semeia Studies 50; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007) 71–84 (p. 78).

59. This is exactly what cultural memory studies argue: that "identity is created by memory through interpreting the past as a coherent narrative, or a set of narratives" (Philip Davis, *Memories of Ancient Israel: an Introduction to Biblical History: Ancient and Modern* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008] 106). Mitchell adds that in Persian times this identity was formed in response to the surrounding cultures. The texts served as exercises to counter a historical opposition experienced by the audience ("How Lonely Sits the City," 80–81). See also Leith, "Israel among the Nations," 276; Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 48; and Hendel, "Cultural Memory," 30–31.

60. Marc Brettler argues that "this idea of biblical remembering should not be conceived of as an abstract activity, but as one intimately connected to performance" ("Memory in Ancient Israel," in *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* [ed. Michael Alan Signer; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001] 1–11

settings can be distinguished that are intertwined with the previously discussed memories: war, negotiation, and worship. These three levels also appear in Berquist's analysis of the role of Jerusalem for the community in Yehud. He labels them imperial-governmental, political-symbolic, and cultic.⁶¹

Weapon in Warfare

In the first instance, water functions as a weapon in warfare. The one controlling the water resources is the one likely to win the battle. Water is consciously used as a way to outsource the enemy and to secure the city.⁶² Water supplies are kept secured and far away from the opponent, as shown in 2 Chronicles 32, where David uses the cisterns in his battle against the Assyrians. In 2 Chr 18:26, Micaiah is kept in prison with the bare minimum of food and water after delivering a negative prophecy to the king. The unfavorable prediction turns the prophet into an enemy, at least in the king's conception; hence, the hostile treatment. It is believed that the enemy will be less dangerous with limited or no access to resources and that he will less likely overpower his opponent.⁶³ More war references can be found in passages in which water has to be crossed to engage in battle, forms a territorial boundary, or marks the place of a victory monument, such as in 1 Chr 18:3.⁶⁴

War scenes are not limited to the human realm; they can involve God as well. In Hag 2:6 and Zech 9:4, God is using the sea in order to defeat the enemy of his people. Similarly, most of the wilderness memories use water as a weapon against the Egyptians. God splits the sea to let his people through, but the same water causes the death of the enemy. When the water is given to drink, it works as a reverse weapon. In the desert, the Israelites will easily die of thirst, but God intervenes and provides water. God uses both the destroying

[p. 5]). He makes reference to the Babylonian Talmud in which it is written: "remembering leads to doing" (*b. Menah.* 43b). This means that memories, including those involving water, are powerful.

61. The application of the imperial-governmental category to Jerusalem refers to its role as an urban place in the middle of agrarian space. It accommodates military, officials, and all those who do not produce their own food. A second role for Jerusalem is political and symbolic. The city represents the government by means of palaces and symbolic signs of power. Third, Jerusalem inhabits the temple and functions as a place of worship. These three roles of the city are made possible through space construction and how it is incorporated in cultural memory, as Berquist shows ("Spaces of Jerusalem," 46–47).

62. Klingbeil, "Water," 819.

63. On Hezekiah's measure as one of the "typical measures of siege warfare" see, Steven McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004) 348–49 (p. 348). See also Sara Japhet, *2 Chronik* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2003) 421–22, 424–25. On the limitation of food and drink as punishment, see McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 286, 291; Japhet, *2 Chronik*, 231.

64. See for instance also 1 Chr 19:16.

and saving aspect of water as a weapon. From the community's point of view, however, it is the positive connotation that is evoked each time.⁶⁵

Weapon in Negotiation

The second setting of negotiation is closely related to war, though less focused on a physical encounter of the several parties. The conflict can be resolved other than by fighting the opponent; one negotiates. In Ezra 10:6, Ezra does not drink water in order to repent and atone for the sin of the community. He fears divine retribution and hopes to appease God by refusing something that is essential and important: water. A similar negotiation occurs in 1 Chronicles 11 when David refuses the water from the Bethlehem source and pours it as a libation to God. Again, this offer is brought hoping the divine will give something in return.⁶⁶

Negotiation also occurs among humans. A gift of bread and water was traditionally considered a sign of peace. When it is said that the Moabites and Ammonites did not meet Israel with this gift, it means no bond of friendship has been forged (Neh 13:2).⁶⁷ Negotiation is also present in Nehemiah's settlement with the king to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2) as well as in the people's use of the sea as a means of transportation. The latter forms a typical trade setting in which one resource is exchanged for another. It is the water that makes this interchange possible.⁶⁸

65. See Ben Zvi, who points out that, once the water has been ordered by God in the act of creation, God can use it as a tool. This use entails both good and bad applications, yet, "the mighty, destructive potential of 'water' [. . .] was balanced by its counterpart, the extremely positive character of 'gentle waters'" ("Thinking of Water"). The dominance of the positive role of water determines the reading of the rest of the repertoire in Persian-period Yehud. In the conflict between God and humanity in Genesis 6, God uses the flood as weapon to wipe out his wicked creation. However, he does not turn the water against the few faithful ones. Noah and his family are safely locked up in the arch. As a result, the flood can be understood as a story in which God fights against the vicious to defend the righteous.

66. See 1 Chr 11:17–18. According to Ralph Klein, this verse concerns a blood sacrifice rather than a water libation: "In David's eyes the water was obtained at such high mortal risk that life was in it, and it had to be poured out as if it were blood despite the fact that he had expressed a strong desire for water from Bethlehem in v. 17" (*1 Chronicles* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006] 305). However, even when the nature of the sacrifice would have changed, David was still pouring water and not blood. Similarly, his intention remains unchanged: pleasing God. See also David Janzen, *The Social Meanings of Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of Four Writings* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); Ithamar Gruenwald, *Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) esp. pp. 180–230.

67. Williamson, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 385.

68. See also 2 Chr 20:2, Ezra 3:7, 2 Chr 8:18.

Weapon in Worship

This brings us to the third setting: worship. Taking into account its metaphorical connections with the divine, it is almost self-evident that water must fulfill a ritual role in memories. In this context, it negotiates between the earthly and the divine realm, being both a human commodity as well as a divine metaphor.⁶⁹ This is the case in Zech 13:1, where a fountain is mentioned for purging and cleansing. In 2 Chronicles 4, Solomon makes a basin for the priests to use to cleanse their bodies; it is called יָם ‘sea’. In Ezra 8:21, a fast is proclaimed beside a river. The same purifying connotation of water occurs in passages in which idolatry had found its way into the city.⁷⁰ In passages remembering the wilderness, the enemy is drowned in the water, freeing the people.⁷¹ Water in worship prepares the faithful to meet with their God and frees them from unclean things, whether the bacteria on their hands, the image of Asherah, or a hostile people.

All three settings, warfare, negotiation, and worship, are found in the Persian-period texts, separately or combined. Remarkably, while the connection between God and water is well established in the wider collection of books in the Hebrew Bible, the Persian-period texts do not emphasize or focus exclusively on this connection. Rather, they express a more human-centered conception of water as a controllable means of power and a point of orientation in their identity formation. This identity entails more than the people’s relation with God.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me summarize the results of this study on memories of water in the Persian period. While the semantic field of water covers a broad range of natural and domesticated forms of water resources, the texts under

69. Klingbeil has a separate section on the ritual role of water. It discusses both the function of water in sacrifice and cleansing and its more symbolic role of representing the divine (“Water,” 818–21). Fishbane labels the connection between natural sources and God as metaphorical (“Well of Living Water,” 5). Note that natural forms of water are particularly linked with the divine according to these authors. However, the location of the temple inside the city allows a connection to be drawn between its domesticated water controlled by the priests and God.

70. For other passages, see 2 Chr 30:14, 29:16. The purifying function of water is also present in nonbiblical texts, such as in the inscriptions of Yahdun-Lâm, Sargon and Narâm-Sîn. For examples and discussion, see Anthonioz, *L’eau, enjeux politiques et théologiques*, 62–70, 111–56. Egyptian examples can be found in the Pyramid texts: “Ho, Pepi! Stand up and become clean, and let your ka become clean. Horus shall cleanse you with cool water” (James Allen, ed., *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005] 109). See also Richard Reidy, *Eternal Egypt: Ancient Rituals for the Modern World* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2010) 211.

71. See Neh 9:11.

study show a clear preference for the latter understanding of water. Even natural water is used in humanly controlled constructions, such as the Fountain Gate and the blocking up of natural springs during warfare. The references evoke memories of formational episodes from the past, centering on the undestroyed Jerusalem, the Davidic monarchy, and the wilderness tradition. As such, they negotiate between past and present, the divine realm and the human world, in order to help the community to reestablish their identity. Although the metaphorical use of water to refer to God is present in the text at times, the memories seem to stress the human perspective. Water is conceived as a powerful tool for the community, both in their interactions with other people and in their encounters with the divine.

Appendix: Water Appearances in the Corpus under Analysis

מים	Isa 63:12	Neh 3:15	נהל	2 Chr 4:15
1 Chr 11:17	Isa 64:1	Neh 12:37	1 Chr 11:32	2 Chr 8:17
1 Chr 11:18	Zech 9:11	מקור	2 Chr 7:8	2 Chr 8:18
1 Chr 14:11	Zech 14:8 (?)	Zech 13:1	2 Chr 15:16	2 Chr 20:2
2 Chr 18:26	בור	נהר	2 Chr 20:16	Ezra 3:7
2 Chr 32:3	1 Chr 11:17	1 Chr 1:48	2 Chr 29:16	Neh 9:6
2 Chr 32:4	1 Chr 11:18	1 Chr 5:9	2 Chr 30:14	Neh 9:9
2 Chr 32:30	1 Chr 11:22	1 Chr 5:26	2 Chr 32:4	Neh 9:11 (twice)
Ezra 10:6	2 Chr 26:10	1 Chr 18:3	2 Chr 33:14	Isa 57:20
Neh 3:26	Neh 9:25	1 Chr 19:16	Neh 2:15	Isa 60:5
Neh 4:17	Zech 9:11	2 Chr 9:26	Ps 124:4	Isa 63:11
Neh 8:1	ברכה	Ezra 8:15	Isa 57:5	Hag 2:6
Neh 8:3	Neh 2:14	Ezra 8:21	Isa 57:6	Zech 9:4
Neh 8:16	Neh 3:15	Ezra 8:31	Isa 66:12	Zech 9:10 (twice)
Neh 9:11	Neh 3:16	Ezra 8:36	Zech 8:12	Zech 10:11
Neh 9:15		Neh 2:7	ים	(twice)
Neh 9:20	מעין	Neh 2:9	1 Chr 16:32	Zech 14:4
Neh 12:37	2 Chr 32:4	Neh 3:7	1 Chr 18:8	Zech 14:8 (twice)
Neh 13:2	עין	Isa 59:19	2 Chr 2:15	מצולה
Ps 124:4	1 Chr 4:32	Isa 60:5	2 Chr 4:2	Neh 9:11
Ps 124:5	2 Chr 32:3	Isa 66:12	2 Chr 4:3	Zech 1:8
Isa 57:20	Neh 2:4	Zech 9:10	2 Chr 4:4 (twice)	Zech 10:11
Isa 58:11 (twice)			2 Chr 4:10	תהום
				Isa 63:13

Cisterns and Wells in Biblical Memory

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Introduction

In the Tanak, cisterns and wells serve as backdrops in many biblical stories; while not central foci, they nevertheless evoke a range of meanings and values across the collection of biblical books. The Hebrew Bible can be seen to constitute a selected social memory of the religious community of Israel, and by exploring the references to cisterns and wells in the collective whole, we can begin to understand the meaning they encoded for the community, which was reinforced through reading and rereading the texts in which they appear. Unsurprisingly, they evoke both life, when they provide water, and its opposite, death, when water dries up or when a person or animal falls into either. In addition, they evoke the opposites, fullness and emptiness. They also evoke concealment, which can be both positive, when it involves hiding from danger, and negative, when it is the result of forced imprisonment or an intention to deceive. In this contribution, we will focus our attention particularly on cisterns and wells located in walled settlements, in light of the announced theme of the volume. Thus, we will construe “city” to include a walled settlement, which could be what is commonly called a city as well as a town.

Definitions

The inhabitants of ancient Judah and Yehud had three main water resources: springs that were natural outlets of subterranean water, wells dug down to reach subterranean water, and plastered cisterns and other plastered reservoirs that collected runoff water from seasonal rains.¹ The Jordan River would not have been used as a regular water supply for the hill-country settlements, and water that ran in wadis during the spring rains was a temporary, seasonal resource

1. Hayah Katz, “‘He Shall Bathe in Water; Then He Shall Be Pure’: Ancient Immersion Practice in the Light of Archaeological Evidence,” *VT* 62 (2012) 369–80, esp. p. 375. For an analysis of types of water resources, their domestication, and the memories they evoke in biblical texts commonly assumed to have been written first in the Persian or Hellenistic periods, see Karolien Vermeulen, “In Defense of the City: Memories of Water in the Persian Period,” pp. 157–175 in this volume.

only. The availability of springs varied across the geography and determined the need to dig wells and create cisterns and reservoirs to have access to this essential life resource. Springs and wells were the preferred means of accessing clean fresh water; a well required the extensive investment of labor, personnel, and technological expertise to create and was primarily found in walled settlements rather than villages.²

Cities almost always were located beside a permanent source of fresh water, either a spring or a well, and the need to secure unrestricted access to the water meant it usually was protected by being located within the city wall or had its water directed through some sort of system that delivered the vital resource to those inside the city.³ The most famous example of a settlement built beside a well is Beer-sheba,⁴ but others include Baalat-beer (Josh 15:29; 19:8) and Beer-elim (Isa 15:8). Examples of settlements made possible by being situated beside a spring include 'Ein Gedi (Josh 15:62, 1 Sam 24:1, Ezek 47:10, Song 1:14), 'Ein Dor (1 Sam 28:7), and 'Ein Eglaim (Ezek 47:10).

In contrast, villages and farmsteads in the mountains, Shephelah, and wilderness often had to rely on cisterns for their water, which yielded a lower quality of water that, nevertheless, allowed the creation of a permanent community, particularly if it were a cooperative venture that was large enough to serve more than a single family.⁵ A single example is mentioned in the Bible, namely, Bor-Ashan (1 Sam 30:30).⁶ Being stagnant once contained, water in

2. They also were dug in wilderness areas to water flocks and their owners.

3. The three water works fed by the Gihon Spring and aimed at bringing its water into the city of Jerusalem, the "Warren's Shaft," the Siloam Channel, and the Hezekiah's Tunnel, are good examples of systems of this sort ("Jerusalem Archaeological Sites: Biblical Water Systems," *Jewish Virtual Library* [accessed August 17, 2014]. Online: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Archaeology/jerwater.html>).

4. Gen 21:14, 31–33; 22:19; 26:23, 33; 28:10; 46:1, 5; Josh 15:28; 19:2; Judg 20:1; 1 Sam 3:20; 8:2; 2 Sam 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 7, 15; 1 Kgs 4:25; 19:3; 2 Kgs 12:1; 23:8; 1 Chr 4:28; 21:2; 2 Chr 19:4; 24:1; 30:5; Neh 11:27, 30; Amos 5:5; 8:14. It is notable that the date of the well located just outside the city gate at Beer-sheba is debated and that, during the Iron Age, water supply was secured by directing runoff from the Hebron stream into a massive, five chambered plastered cistern, in spite of the name of the site. For the date of the well, see Rupert Chapman, "Review of *Beer-sheba II* by Ze'ev Herzog," *PEQ* 119 (1987) 157–60, esp. p. 159.

5. For examples dating to the Iron Age, see Avraham Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012) 128–77. The ecological niches did not change substantially over time, so that cisterns would have been required in any periods these regions were inhabited.

6. It seems likely that the place designated Bor Beth Eked in 2 Kgs 10:14, where the 42 Judahite royals who were en route to visit their cousins were remembered to have been murdered, was some sort of prison facility: the cistern of "the house of binding/fetters" and so not a civilian settlement. It is unclear if the *bôr* of the *sirâ* in 2 Sam 3:26

cisterns became breeding grounds for algae, bacteria, and insect larvae.⁷ Even so, it still could be used to irrigate gardens by hand, for crafts, laundry, and human and animal consumption, as necessary. For this reason, cisterns were often constructed in walled settlements that also had a communal spring or a well.⁸

Cisterns ranged in size and shape from small household cisterns to huge community cisterns, such as the one found at Beer-Sheba, which is thought to date to the mid-10th century B.C.E.,⁹ and at Arad, which was dated by the excavator to the reign of Jehoshaphat in the 9th century B.C.E. In a revision of the stratigraphy and dating for the final report, the cistern has been dated to the mid-8th century B.C.E.¹⁰ It is not clear if a separate term would have been used to refer to more public reservoirs; the only examples that feature in Hebrew biblical memory seem to be an upper and lower cistern located in Jerusalem.¹¹ Hezekiah is remembered as having built the upper “pool” or reservoir (2 Kgs 20:20), and the lower pool was passed on in memory as “the kings pool,” which perpetuates its creation as a royal endeavor whose crediting to a specific king was not deemed important. Eccl 2:6 attributes to the king, who is supposed to be Solomon, the creation of reservoirs of this sort to water his forest of growing trees. Interestingly, the reservoirs in Jerusalem are designated by the term *bērēkā* (ברכה), which evokes the idea that divine blessing has been captured and harnessed in these large, public water storage facilities.

is an occupied place or an isolated cistern used to water flocks in the wilderness when water is present in it.

7. According to John P. Oleson, “Cistern water had a bad reputation among the Greeks and Romans with regard to taste, clarity, and healthfulness,” and it is likely the same applied in earlier periods (“Water Works,” *ABD* 6:883–93, esp. p. 887).

8. Oleson, “Water Works,” 887.

9. See Ze’ev Herzog, “Beersheba, An Update to Vol. 1, pp. 161–173,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. Ephraim Stern; 5 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993–2008) 5:1594–97.

10. For Arad, see Yohanan Aharoni, “Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple,” *BA* 31 (1968) 1–32, esp. 6–7. He seems to have dated it to the time of Jehoshaphat, in the 9th century B.C.E. (Str X). After a review of the pottery evidence, Ze’ev Herzog has re-dated Str X to the mid-8th century B.C.E. (“The Fortress Mound at Arad: An Interim Report,” *TA* 29 [2002] 3–109, esp. p. 14). Herzog explicitly dates the creation of the water cisterns to Str. X (p. 12). For the pottery analysis, see Lily Singer-Avitz, “Arad: The Iron Age Pottery Assemblages,” *TA* 29 [2002] 110–214, esp. pp. 159–69. See also George R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 3; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1985) 1:167 for Iron Age reservoirs and water systems.

11. The upper pool: 2 Kgs 18:17; Isa 7:3, 36:2; lower pool: Isa 22:9, 11; Neh 2:14, 3:15 and probably 16. It is unclear whether the “great cistern” in Secu in 1 Sam 19:22 is located in a city or town setting. For the possible location of the upper pool, see the survey in Millard Burrows, “The Conduit of the Upper Pool,” *ZAW* 70 (1958) 221–27; and Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday & Company, 1988) 230.

Pools are also mentioned in other cities such as Gibeon (2 Sam 2:13), Hebron (2 Sam 4:12), and Samaria (1 Kgs 22:38). Due to their size, unlike cisterns, huge reservoirs and pools were often partially built rather than cut into stone. The other main difference between cisterns and other reservoirs is the fact that the latter were usually left uncovered¹² and could also be spring-fed, if the one at Gibeon is to be equated with the water system that has been excavated.

Cisterns and wells are distinguished in the Hebrew Bible. The most common term for a cistern is *bôr* (בּוֹר), but the noun also can mean ‘pit, dungeon, prison, grave, and sepulcher’ (Gen 37:20–29; 40:15; 41:14; Exod 21:33; Isa 14:15; Ezek 32:23; Ps 7:16[15]).¹³ Additionally, a cistern is referred to as a *gēb* (גֵּב; Jer 14:3) once, and once as a *gebe*’ (גִּבְעָה; Isa 30:14). Both uses are in the book of Isaiah, so it is difficult to know if this was a common alternate expression or a descriptive one favored particularly by this biblical author. A well, on the other hand, is a *bē’ēr* (בְּעֵר; Gen 14:10, 21:30, 29:2; Num 21:18).¹⁴ Both a well and a cistern involve digging, but a cistern is a plastered receptacle to catch and retain rainwater, while a well is a shaft that does not require plastering, which provides access to underground streams. The expressions ‘flowing water’ (נִזְלִים; Prov 5:15) and ‘living water’ (מֵיִם חַיִּים; Gen 26:19, Song 4:15) are used to describe water taken from wells but never from cisterns.¹⁵

It has been suggested that both roots בּוֹר and בְּעֵר are expansions of an original biconsonantal root בּר, which can be related to Akkadian *bāru* and the *baru*-diviner.¹⁶ The latter suggestion is unlikely; the underlying root of the Akkadian term ‘diviner’, *bârām*, is *brî* ‘to see’, while as a verb, בְּעֵר is more likely to be associated with Akkadian *burrum*, from *bûr*, which is used at Mari to mean ‘to usher a person’ or ‘to announce the coming of a messenger’, and in Babylonian Akkadian, ‘to explain’. At Mari, the noun *bîrum/bârum*, which illustrates the standard vowel equivalency of western *î* and eastern *û* in Akkadian, describes a well. It is unclear whether the word should be understood as a “primary noun” without an etymology or if it might derive in some way ultimately from the root *bûr* meaning ‘to live’.¹⁷

12. Oleson, “Water Works,” 887.

13. HALOT 1:116.

14. HALOT 1:106.

15. Archibald C. Dickie and Dorothea W. Harvey, “Cistern,” in *the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–88) 1:702.

16. Jean-Georges Heintz, “בְּעֵר *bē’ēr*; בּוֹר *bôr*,” TDOT 1:463–66, esp. p. 464; HALOT 1:116.

17. We wish to thank Jean-Marie Durand for clarifying the likely Akkadian equivalents of Hebrew בְּעֵר in an e-mail exchange. He pointed out there are obstacles to assuming the noun *bîrum/bârum* derives from *bûr* meaning ‘to live’, even if that would be a plausible association; perhaps an in-depth examination of the issue by a qualified linguist might yield a likely answer one way or the other. Another point for in-depth

The root באר is used as a Piel verb three times in the Hebrew Bible in connection with divine revelation. However, it is unclear whether the two uses associated with explaining the Torah in Deut 1:5 and 27:8 and the use connected with making manifest a divine vision in Hab 2:2 derive specifically from a desire to portray the Torah and prophecy metaphorically as wells giving access to the source of living water, YHWH, or not. There could have been a more widespread application of the root in a verbal sense meaning either ‘to make manifest, to make clear’, ‘to explain; to expound’, as it came to mean in post-Biblical Hebrew, with the latter meaning occurring in Babylonian Akkadian as well, or else, ‘to confirm a legal action after testimony is given or give legal force to’.¹⁸

examination would be whether the noun means ‘well’ only or might also designate a ‘cistern’, though usage in one language need not parallel that in another. Other discussions of the Akkadian evidence can be found in print in, for example, n. 20 below.

18. *To make manifest/clear*: A number of scholars have seen the original meaning as ‘to engrave’ on the basis especially of the uses in Deut 27:8 and Hab 2:2. See, for example, Ernst Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (KAT 12; Leipzig: Deichertsche, 1922) 347–48; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 128–29. Francis I. Andersen also links the action of the verb with the act of writing because that is the context in Deut 27:8 and Hab 2:2, but he points out it might also mean ‘dictate’ rather than ‘preach’ if either prophet were illiterate and so needed to rely on an amanuensis to do the actual writing (*Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 25; New York: Doubleday, 1964] 202).

To explain/expound: E.g., Samuel R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (3rd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902) 8; Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 14; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9* (2nd ed.; WBC 6A; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001) 15–16; Eckart Otto, “Mose, der erste Schriftgelehrte. Deuteronomium 1,5 in der Fabel des Pentateuch,” in *L’Écrit et L’Esprit: Études d’histoire du texte et de théologie biblique en hommage à Adrian Schenker* (OBO 214; Fribourg: University Press / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 273–84, esp. pp. 276–80, who explicitly denies a linguistic tie between Akkadian *bāru(m)* III in the CAD B, 125–27, “to establish the true legal situation by legal procedure involving an oath,” and Hebrew באר (p. 279). The uses in Deut 27:8 and Hab 2:2 involve writing down revelations for transmission, while in Deut 1:5 Moses will verbally explain the revelation he receives to the people before it is also written down on stones. The verbal form, then, seems to carry a sense of making something that has been hidden or restricted more widely accessible. This is the function of a well; it allows hidden water to become accessible for wider use. In all three cases, the verb is used in connection with something that has originated from YHWH that has been divulged to an intermediary, who is then entrusted with the task of making it accessible to a wider audience via further oral or written transmission.

To confirm a legal action: see David Toshio Tsumura, “Hab 2,2 in the Light of Akkadian Legal Practice,” ZAW 94 (1982) 294–95; George Braulik and Norbert Lohfink, “Deuteronomium 1,5 התורה הזאת באר את: ‘Er verlieh dieser Tora Rechtskraft,’” in *Textarbeit: Studien zu Texten und ihrer Rezeption aus dem Alten Testament und der*

The two uses in Deuteronomy seem to be designed to set up a deliberate contrast between the Torah, as the well giving access to fresh water that is vital to sustain life, and the divine mountain, Mt. Horeb, which is a place of 'dryness' and so is not life-sustaining. There is an implied theological claim being made that the divine habitation, associated in mythic tradition with the mountain of god but manifest on earth in the temple, is of lesser importance than the Torah, the written divine will, as a source of divine revelation and manifestation. This would seem to point to a sociohistorical situation in which the temple exists but where the author of Deuteronomy, at least, would like to see the Torah play the defining role in the community of faith rather than the temple and its priesthood.

The two terms *bôr* and *bēʿer* have been widely seen to be interchangeable on the basis of two instances in which the Masoretes pointed בֹּאֵר to be read *bōʿr*, as though it were *bôr* (בּוֹר) 'cistern' in 2 Sam 23:15–16 and Jer 2:13. However, when the passages are examined individually, an explanation for each exception to the rule can be found that upholds the otherwise standard distinction maintained between the two terms. The memory of the "cistern" at Bethlehem beside the town gate that David's men crossed enemy lines to secure a drink from for their lord (1 Chr 11:17–18) would more likely have been a communal well, as the consonantal text of 2 Sam 23:15–16 suggests. The writer of Chronicles appears to have changed the tradition from a well into a cistern (consonantal text *b-w-r*) in order to heighten the selfish nature of David's act of allowing his men to risk their lives for his whimsical desire for water that was not even fresh. It is one of the few examples he includes in which David is allowed to appear to be fallible.¹⁹ The Masoretic pointing of

Umwelt Israels. Festschrift für Peter Weimar zur Vollendung seines 60. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen (ed. Klaus Kiesow and Thomas Meurer; AOAT 294; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003) 35–52, esp. pp. 36–40, 46–51; Joachim Schaper, "The 'Publication' of Legal Texts in Ancient Judah," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 225–36, esp. pp. 225–33.

19. Citing *HALOT*, Gary Knoppers notes that *bôr* (or *bʿr* in Samuel) almost always means 'cistern' and so favors its rendering in 1 Chr 11:17 and 2 Sam 23:15 as 'cistern', not 'well', specifying fresh water is not involved. This is an alternate understanding to the one we have proposed. He does not comment specifically on the implication associated with his understanding that the water David craved would have been standing versus fresh water, even though he notes this is one of the few illustrations the Chronicler allows of David's fallibility (*1 Chronicles 10–29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 12A; London: Doubleday, 2004] 550). While others have not commented on this possible deliberate choice of terms by the Chronicler, Hans W. Hertzberg sees the portrayal to highlight David's ability to gather knights about himself who would do anything out of loyalty for their liege (*I & II Samuel: A Commentary* [trans. J. S. Bowden; OTL; London: SCM, 1964] 405), which builds on the logic of the comment about the three in the text at the end of 2 Sam 23:17 // 1 Chr 11:19. In contrast, Walter Brueggemann sees the story to focus on the "binding power of sacrament,"

the uses of בֹּאֵר in 2 Sam 23:15–16 is secondary and has harmonized the two versions of the story.

The Masoretic pointing of בֹּאֵר as *bōʿr* in Jer 2:13 has arisen under different circumstances. The passage has YHWH declare that his people have committed two evils: (1) they have forsaken him, the ‘fountainhead’ (מְקוֹר) of living water, and (2) they have dug out for themselves בְּאֵרוֹת. A further explanation then follows concerning the בְּאֵרוֹת; the standard translation reads: ‘cracked cisterns that can hold no water’.²⁰ Two alternate renderings would be ‘faulty wells that cannot sustain [life] with [their] water’ or ‘faulty wells [whose] water does not endure’. Focusing on the logic that binds together the two kinds of evil, the people must have dug wells in their attempt to access living water from a different source (deity); cisterns would not have provided access to fresh water, only captured rain water.

In the further explanation concerning the second evil, the Niphal form of the root שָׁבַר can refer to the state of being broken, smashed, or, more generally destroyed, with the derivative senses of ‘oppressed’ or ‘humbled’. While the usual rendering ‘cracked’ is possible, so would a more generic ‘damaged’ or ‘faulty’, on the basis of Ps 124:7.²¹ Grammatically, the reference to water could be construed as an accusative of manner rather than a direct object,²² or as the

noting that David’s drinking of the water would have been “a violation of something holy that binds him to his men,” and his pouring of the water onto the ground “enacts a deep solidarity with his men” (*First and Second Samuel* [Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990] 349). He suggests the story aims to portray David with egalitarian sensibility to counter the David of selfish arrogance, which would be the opposite of our understanding.

20. So accepted without comment on the spelling with medial *alep* rather than *waw* by, for instance, Paul Volz, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (KAT 10; Leipzig: Deichertsche, 1922) 13–15, 20; Artur Weiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia Kapitel 1–25, 13* (ATD 20; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959) 24; Walter Brueggemann, *To Pluck Up, To Tear Down: Jeremiah 1–25* (International Theological Commentary; Edinburgh: Handsel, 1988) 35; Siegfried Herrmann, *Jeremia* (Biblicher Kommentar, Altes Testament 12/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990) 127–28; Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25* (WBC 26; Dallas: Word, 1991) 29–30; Georg Fischer, *Jeremia* (HTKAT; 2 vols.; Freiberg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005) 48, 62. Wilhelm Rudolph states in a note that בְּאֵרוֹת = בּוֹרוֹת (*Jeremia* [Handbuch der Orientalistik 1/12; 3rd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968] 16), while John Holladay admits there is “orthographic uncertainty about the word(s) בּוֹר/בֹּאֵר, but as here vocalized the word is assumed to be a בּוֹר, an excavation of the soil, sometimes for the storage of grain, but usually for the storage of water” (*Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapter 1–25* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986] 92).

21. HALOT, 4:403–4. The meaning ‘hold or contain’ is also found in Pilpel.

22. See, e.g., Arthur E. Cowley, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar as Edited and Enlarged by the Late E. Kautsch* (2nd English ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1910) 374, §118. Since the passage in question involves poetry, where words often can be elided, if one were to argue that life is the implied direct object of the verb *to sustain*, then it might also be possible to suggest that *water* here is an accusative of material (pp. 370–71,

subject of the verb כֹּל. The Hiphil of the root כֹּל can mean ‘to hold a quantity of something’ but equally, ‘to endure or bear’ and arguably, ‘to sustain’ with food or water, like the Pilpel form.²³ It seems the further description of the בארות might have influenced their subsequent interpretation as cisterns rather than wells, particularly the Niphal participle נֹשְׁבֵרִים, which could easily evoke a cracked cistern. Whether this is a later expansion to the text or not cannot be determined,²⁴ but the subsequent pointing of both instances to read as though they were cisterns rather than wells highlights the futility of any human effort to create a means of securing life-sustaining water: the people seek to replace fresh water with captured rainwater, apparently failing to realize that YHWH supplies that as well. It denies the people’s more logical, original approach of seeking an alternate source of fresh water.²⁵

2 Sam 17:18–19 provides a rare instance for which it could be argued that *bē’ēr* and *bôr* are interchangeable synonyms. Men are hidden inside a *bē’ēr* in the courtyard of a private house, during which time the well’s opening is hidden under a pile of grain. To hide men in such a fashion for some length of time and to be able to cover over the access point and disguise it under grain is more easily accomplished of a cistern (*bôr*) than a deep well shaft, though the latter is not impossible. In addition, it would seem more likely that a private residence would have had a cistern rather than a well in its courtyard, though again, private ownership and control of a well would not have been impossible. Thus, while logistically the hiding would have been more easily accomplished in a cistern than in a well, it cannot be concluded for this reason alone that the author was using *bē’ēr* to describe a cistern rather than a well. The intention might have been to highlight the danger and difficulty involved.

§§117ff.); Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia biblica 14/2; trans. Takamitsu Muraoka; 2 vols.; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2000) 2:440–44.

23. HALOT 2:463–64. It should be noted that the first two meanings are attested in both the Pilpel and Hiphil usage, so it might be possible that the meaning ‘sustain’ also was attached to both usages, with this passage being the one instance in Hiphil. There is no evidence to support the emendation of the text to reflect an underling root כָּלָא instead of כֹּל, as Volz does, following Ehrlich (Volz, *Prophet Jeremiah*, 15).

24. Jack R. Lundbom seems to imply this is the case when he states that the phrase “broken cisterns” is a deliberate correction for rhetorical effect (*Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 21A; New York: Doubleday, 1999] 268).

25. Michael DeRoche has suggested that this passage should be connected with the euphemistic use of wells and cisterns to describe sexual intercourse in Prov 5:15–18 and Song 4:12, 15 where, uniquely, Israel is an adulterous husband who is seeking to have sex with women (gods) other than his “wife,” YHWH. His proposal reverses the otherwise standard imagery in the HB texts of YHWH as husband and Israel as unfaithful wife and so is not convincing (“Israel’s ‘Two Evils’ in Jeremiah II 13,” VT 31 [1981] 369–72). Others who have not found it plausible ultimately include, for example, Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 29–30.

While distinctive and distinguished terms, the concepts of well and cistern have a great deal of overlap in biblical memory. Both were used to provide water, flowing or still, needed to sustain the life of humans, plants, and animals. In addition, both were underground, dug-out spaces into which both humans and animals could fall. For this reason, both needed covering but both also could become sites of death and concealment.

Wells and Cisterns as Sources of Life and Blessing

Wells have more positive general connotations than cisterns, undoubtedly due to their ability to give access to fresh water from the underground water table (e.g., Jer 6:7); however, in biblical memory, they play a minor role in stories about walled settlements. Public wells were a natural place for people to meet one another as they drew water for daily use. They are places particularly associated with females, who were primarily responsible for fetching water for the household on a daily basis. The trip to the well was a socially sanctioned reason for women to be out in public, where they could socialize with other women and also be seen by men in an acceptable setting. Wells are remembered in the Bible as the most important “matching venue.” Isaac, Jacob, and Moses secure their wives (Gen 24:11–61; Genesis 29; Exod 2:15–21) at wells; the first is localized outside the city of Nahor in Aram Naharaim while the other two seem to be set in rural surroundings. Saul might have been distracted from his quest for kingship in his meeting of women at the well in Mizpah, but he continues on his quest.²⁶ In this sense, wells evoke the life-generating force of women, as they engage in accessing and securing the essential water needed for daily tasks.

A well is used metaphorically in Song 4:13–15 to describe a female’s reproductive organs. Three water images occur in these two verses: ‘emissions’ (שלחים) in v. 13²⁷ and then a ‘fountain’ (מעין) in a garden and a ‘well

26. For the trope of women at the well, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) 61.

27. While the imagery here seems to be of a woman’s vagina becoming lubricated in anticipation of sex, it is worth noting that the reservoir that caught the outflowing of the Siloam tunnel was called the pool of Shelah. The meaning of שלחים is disputed among commentators and translators; ‘offshoots’ is perhaps the most popular; for a fairly recent defense of this translation, see, for example, Duane Garrett, *Song of Songs* (AB 23B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004) 196–97. For the idea of a ‘groove’ or ‘channel’, see the discussion in Marvin Pope, *The Song of Songs* (AB 7C; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977) 490. The word is plural, so conduit is incorrect, but we think he was on the right track; he needed to focus on what traveled through the channel rather than the channel itself. Francis Landy, however, is happy to construe the term as ‘irrigation channels’, because he relates the imagery in 4:13–14 to a fantastical garden rather than its referent, the woman (*Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* [Bible and Literature Series 7; Sheffield: Almond, 1983] 192–93, 331 n. 17). He appears to be followed by J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs: A*

of flowing water' (באר מים חיים) in v. 15. All three evoke the idea of fresh, flowing water; it is likely that the emissions were thought to be connected to the life-producing womb in some way. The well would symbolize the channel that gave access to underground, fresh water that flowed like the emissions. In the context of female anatomy, it would symbolize the vagina and likely, in ancient thought, the womb as the source of the emissions, which was also conceived of metaphorically as a 'spring' (מעיין). The imagery evokes the woman's receptiveness to male impregnation and thus, by extension, her fertility and life-generating ability.²⁸ Some of the substances mentioned in v. 14 are known to have spermicidal properties, so the threefold, water-based metaphor could be intended to emphasize the woman's readiness to experience the sensual pleasures of sexual intercourse without any attendant pregnancy or parenting responsibilities.²⁹ Even so, the life-giving associations are still present in the need to prevent contraception, to make the experience more pleasurable.³⁰ The

Commentary (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005) 176–77. However, she sees v. 15 to contain “veiled allusions to the exchange of bodily fluids, in kissing, fondling, and sexual intercourse” (p. 180), as had, for example, Carey E. Walsh before her: the woman is aroused and is a garden “teeming with all kinds of scents (4:10, 14), plenty of fruits (4:13) and waters of life (4:15) yet the frustrated man cannot gain entry” (*Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Exotic, and the Song of Songs* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000] 98). Harris H. Hirschberg links the term with Arabic *šalh* ‘vagina’, but again, it seems better to focus on the fluids lubricating the vagina (“Some Additional Arabic Etymologies in OT Lexicography,” *VT* 11 [1961] 373–85, esp. p. 380). Those who have seen an explicit sexual dimension to the three references to water include, for example, Othmar Keel, who cites the association of the concepts “canal,” “womb,” and “vagina” in Sumerian and Egyptian love poems (*The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* [trans. Frederick J. Gaiser; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994] 174–81); Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 176; Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 155–58. Michael V. Fox, on the other hand, specifically denies the reference to “channels” is to the female vagina or womb because it is plural and one would expect a singular term, so he concludes the youth is praising his beloved more generally and not focusing on her private parts, even though he thinks the point of the double metaphor is to convey the feelings the girl evokes in her lover (*The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985] 137–38). Michael Goulder, however, suggests the plural form is “for delicacy” and definitely associates it with the vagina (*The Song of Fourteen Songs* [JSOTSup 36; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986] 38).

28. Longman, *Song of Songs*, 157–58.

29. For a spermicidal reading, see Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and “Sexuality” in the Hebrew Bible* (BibInt 26; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 69–89, esp. pp. 86–89. For an emphasis on sexual pleasure, see Francis Landy, “The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden,” *JBL* 98 (1979) 517.

30. Francis Landy notes the dual meaning of the garden of love here; it both is the woman and yet is separate from her, because she is the source that waters it and owns it (4:12, 15–16). He emphasizes the polysemantic nature of poetry to caution against

Hebrew Bible associates wells with starting new families and generating life, as sources of blessings.³¹

In contrast to wells or even springs, cisterns are remembered as being essential for life in the Promised Land for nonurban farmers. The ideal farmstead featured a house with adjoining vineyards, olive, fig, and other fruit trees, and a cistern (Deut 6:10–11, 2 Kgs 18:31 // Isa 36:16, Neh 9:25, 2 Chr 26:10). This reminds readers that the Promised Land is not one of perennial rivers and irrigation agriculture but is rather a land where YHWH sends rain to water the crops and sustain human, animal, and plant life.³² Cisterns are a means of capturing that precious essence sent from the celestial storehouses and storing it for later use.³³ They allow farmers to establish homes in more marginal areas that lack natural springs, where they can convert wilderness land into cultivated spaces through their hard work and adequate annual rainfall. Surveys of the hill country of Judah and the Shephelah have demonstrated the widespread existence of farmsteads in the Iron II periods, which continued to be the typical form of rural settlement in the Persian and Hellenistic periods.³⁴

Cisterns exemplify and evoke the biblical world view of the Promised Land being YHWH's garden tended by his farmer servants. The enhanced memory found in stories in the book of Chronicles about the past kings of Judah feature King Uzziah having dug cisterns in the Shephelah and the flatland for his herds (2 Chr 26:10). This claim is an expression of royal ideology that considered the king to be the overseer of the national god's estate that he was responsible to develop and maintain.³⁵ Cities are consumption centers for goods produced in part outside their own walls but primarily in rural areas; a city's "daughters"³⁶

seeing the garden solely as a sexual euphemism ("The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden," *JBL* 98 [1979] 513–28, esp. pp. 517, 519).

31. For another dimension of the metaphor of a woman as a well or a cistern, see Prov 5:15–20; 23:27. A man should drink only from his own water sources and not lust after foreign women, who are like a "deep cistern" and "narrow well." For a discussion, see Robert B. Chisholm Jr., "'Drink Water from Your Own Cistern': A Literary Study of Proverbs 5.15–23," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157/628 (2000) 397–409.

32. Theodore Hiebert, *The Yahwist's Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 36–37.

33. See Job 37:6, 9, 38:22, 25; Ps 135:7 and Jer 10:13.

34. For the statistics, see Diana Edelman, "Settlement Patterns in Persian-Era Yehud," in *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbors in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods* (ed. Yigal Levin; LSTS 65; London: T. & T. Clark, 2007) 52–64. For the Iron II period, see Avraham Faust, *Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period: The Archaeology of Desolation* (Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012).

35. For a sketch of the concept of divine and royal farmer in the ancient Near East and the ideology of YHWH as farmer of the Promised Land, see the article on pp. 115–155 in this volume by Diana Edelman, "Gardens in Biblical Memory."

36. For the use of the term *daughter* to describe farms or villages that are administratively attached to an urban center, see Josh 15:45, 47; 17:11, 16; Judg 1:27; 11:26.

or dependent rural villages and farmsteads are its lifeline, providing vital supplies that are not otherwise present or being produced by the center in sufficient quantities to support the concentration of royalty and its officials.

Wells at Beer-sheba, Baalat-beer, and Beer-elim enabled settlements to exist on a permanent basis; Beer-sheba is remembered as a site where people negotiated and made agreements and treaties. Both Abraham and Isaac made treaties with Abimelech, King of the Philistines, by the wells at Beersheba (Gen 21:22–34, 26:19–33).³⁷ It is noteworthy that these particular wells are not remembered as being located in urban space, yet they evoke an attempt to extend urban-based power and control, represented by Abimelech's status as king, beyond city walls into adjoining territory. The three settlements beside wells also call to mind other wells located in wilderness settings without any apparent permanent adjoining occupation, like Beer-lahai-roi (Gen 16:14, 21:19, 24:62, 25:11) and those envisioned in Num 20:17 and 21:16–18. They all serve as reminders of cooperative efforts to tame the wilderness and allow human and animal life to survive in such harsh environments.

There is no indication that wells as sources of water or water *per se* played a special role in making treaties in the ancient Near East. However, as places of public gathering, wells and cisterns offered very suitable places for making treaties. Witnesses could be secured there, particularly in rural settings; in urban settings the city gate with its side chambers that often contained benches was the place where business routinely was conducted because of the ease of securing witnesses as people entered and left.³⁸ Wells and cisterns could also play a role in promoting cooperation among those using them to maintain their flocks (Gen 29:2–10) and their own families.³⁹ On the other hand, as sources of water, it is not surprising that wells were sometimes also sources of arguments and confrontations over water ownership and rights, as reflected in the confrontations between Abraham and Isaac with Abimelech for the wells of Beer-sheba (Gen 20:22–34, 26:15–16).⁴⁰ Some wells in the Bible bear names related to confrontations of this sort, such as the two wells Isaac called *Esek* ('contention') and *Sitnah* ('enmity'), reflecting the quarrel between his herders and those of Gerar (Gen 26:20–21).⁴¹

37. Ronald T. Hyman, "Multiple Functions of Wells in the Tanakh," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 34 (2006) 180–89, esp. p. 184.

38. See, for example, John W. McKay, "Exodus xxiii 1–3, 6–8: A Decalogue for the Administration of Justice in the City Gate," *VT* 21 (1971) 311–25, esp. pp. 322–25; Ferdinand E. Deist, *The Material Culture of the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 202–3; Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 234. See also pp. 43–59 in the present volume, Carey Walsh, "Testing Entry: The Social Functions of City-Gates in Biblical Memory."

39. Hyman, "Functions of Wells," 183.

40. So, e.g., Deist, *Material Culture*, 127; Hyman, "Functions of Wells," 182.

41. *Ibid.*, 183.

The treaties made by two forefathers at the wells of Beersheba evoke other treaties, especially the covenant between YHWH with his people at Mt. Horeb. That covenant promises possession of the Promised Land in exchange for obedience to YHWH alone. Deut 6:10–19 reminds the people that when they enter the land YHWH swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they will take possession of houses they did not build, filled with goods they did not procure, with cisterns they did not hew and vineyards and olive groves they did not plant. It is noteworthy that the blessings of the covenant of Deuteronomy 28 include rain (v. 12), which is the source of the water that fills the cisterns. In Deuteronomy, then, cisterns serve as a tangible demonstration of the blessing of rain YHWH promises to bestow on his obedient people if they keep his Torah. Along with the houses, goods, and agriculturally based livelihood that they will enjoy in the Promised Land, the cisterns represent an aspect of the exemplary lifestyle the people of Israel will enjoy if they remain loyal to the Horeb covenant. However, at the same time, reliance on cisterns to collect rainwater, with limited access to perennial water sources, reminds readers of the precarious nature of life in the Promised Land.

Various passages associate YHWH with living water, which would itself be associated in the minds of the ancient audience, who knew the ancient landscape of Judah and Yehud, with rain, wells or springs, or the Jordan River. YHWH is the giver of rain (Job 5:10), the fountain of living water (Jer 2:13), who waters the earth and whose river is full of water (Ps 65:10[9]), who turns deserts and rocks into pools of water and the parched land and the flint into springs of water (Ps 107:35; 114:8). While the people of Israel might abandon YHWH and think they can find a new source of living water by digging new wells, as in Jer 2:13, they will not succeed, because YHWH is the only source for all types of water; perceived alternate sources will not endure or sustain life.

Cisterns as Places of Imprisonment and Death/Burial

While wells lack negative connotations in biblical memory,⁴² cisterns have many. A common meaning is imprisonment. Joseph and Jeremiah both experienced being confined in a cistern. Joseph's brothers throw him into a waterless cistern in the wilderness to confine him (Gen 37:20–29), but he is pulled out by a passing caravan. He ends up imprisoned again after he is in falsely accused of sexual advances toward his master's wife in Egypt. His employer puts him in the 'royal prison,' the *bêt hassōhar* (בֵּית הַסֹּהַר; Gen 39:20), which Joseph characterizes as 'the holding tank' (הַבּוֹר). He is subsequently released from "the tank" (Gen 41:14) at the command of Pharaoh. Jeremiah's provocative prophecies led to his initial imprisonment in Jerusalem in the former

42. This assumes the two occasions when בֹּר appears in place of the expected בּוֹר in Ps 55:24[23] and 69:16[15] are deliberately rhetorical. This is discussed fully below.

house of the secretary Jonathan, which had been converted into a ‘prison’, a *bêt hakkele*’ (בֵּית הַכֶּלֶא). The location is immediately described as ‘the cistern house’ *bêt habbôr* (בֵּית הַבּוֹר; Jer 37:15–16), where he is put into ‘the vaults’, *haḥānuyôt* (הַחֲנִיּוֹת). He is subsequently moved above ground by the king to the ‘court of the guard’ or perhaps, the ‘enclosure for archery practice’ *ḥaṣar hammāṭārā* (חֲצַר הַמַּטֵּרָה; Jer 37:21), but after further unappreciated words, is lowered into yet another cistern located in that larger space, which belonged to the king’s son Malchiah. He might have died from being trapped in the mud it contained, but he is hauled out by three men at the king’s orders, who make a noose from old rags that he puts around his body, and they drag him free from above (38:1–13). Other memories associate empty cisterns with imprisonment, as *ad hoc* measures or as more formal “holding tanks” in a prison (Isa 24:22; Zech 9:11), and some uses are metaphorical for threatened death (e.g., Ps 40:3[2]; Lam 3:53, 55).

Uncovered or open cisterns can lead to the death of an unsuspecting human or animal that inadvertently falls into one of them. It seems that this was recalled to have been more of a problem in rural areas than in settlements, because legislation envisaged donkeys and oxen as being the most typical victims (Exod 21:33–34). Benaiah killed a lion that was inside a cistern in wintertime (2 Sam 23:20 / 1 Chr 11:22; see also the general comment about human victims in Ps 7:16[15]). Nevertheless, there were cisterns within city walls, and donkeys would have undoubtedly been used to move goods about, so the readers and rereaders of the biblical texts would not have assumed the danger of death from falling into an open cistern would only have been a rural problem.

One memory recalls how a cistern in Mizpah was used to conceal the bodies of a group of murdered pilgrims (Jer 41:1–9). The day after killing the Babylonian appointed governor Gedaliah, his staff, and some Babylonian soldiers who had been stationed in Mizpah, the new regional center set up to replace Jerusalem after its destruction, Ishmael ben Nethaniah, a member of the royal Davidic house, is said to have diverted a party of 80 pilgrims from Shechem and Shiloh into the middle of the town, where he and his men killed all but 10 of them. Those who escaped claimed to have hidden food supplies they could turn over as bribes. The cistern is then remembered for having been the great one built centuries earlier by King Asa when he fortified and equipped Mizpah as a border site in a territorial war with King Baasha of Israel.

This reuse of a cistern as a mass grave that conceals murder but also deprives his victims of rest in She’ol for eternity serves to vilify Ishmael in Judean social memory. It reinforces a nonsympathetic memory for this Davidade, who tried to usurp power and assert a Davidic right to continue to rule in a new situation of imperial control over Yehud as a province of the Babylonian Empire. Undoubtedly, pro-Davidic members of a reading or rereading audience might have been tempted to consider Ishmael a hero, and there probably was a memory shared in some circles that depicted him in this way. The author of

Jeremiah wanted to ensure that the opposite shared memory prevailed in the long run, eventually being the only one shared by the larger group as the other became less relevant over time and disappeared.⁴³

There is archaeological evidence for the use of an abandoned, bell-shaped cistern with an access shaft and sump as a legitimate tomb at Cave 1.10A at Gezer, which was used as a burial place for some 150 years during the Late Bronze period (ca. 1450–1300 B.C.E.).⁴⁴ After serving as a cistern for perhaps 150 years (1600?–ca. 1450 B.C.E.), a new side entrance tunnel was cut, working from the inside outward. The resulting hewn limestone was used to create a higher floor level and a low bench around the back and sides of the refurbished space.⁴⁵ It served as a burial space for at least 72 individuals for perhaps 70 years in the Late Bronze IB, at which point the ceiling collapsed or was deliberately breached during work on the outer defensive wall. Stone debris and soil covered the burials and filled the main chamber. Eventually, ca. 1350 B.C.E. (Late Bronze IIA), the entrance tunnel was redeveloped and some of the deposited debris removed to create a new floor level. The remains of at least 16 individuals were found from this later phase of use.⁴⁶ Tomb 252 at Gezer, dating to the Late Bronze period, might also have been a reused cistern.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, this sort of adaptation of a former cistern to be used for the regular interment of the dead appears to have been the exception to the norm in all periods. The story of the Mizpah incident makes it clear that the cistern was used to hide murdered bodies, which were not given proper burial, rather than to serve as an adapted, proper tomb where the dead were ritually laid to rest in an honorable way and could be remembered by descendants who visited the tomb.

43. For a study of the process of the adaptation of a memory over time among different groups, see the portrayal of Lampião (died 1938) as a heroic social bandit by northeastern Brazilian peasants: Billy J. Chandler (*The Bandit King* [College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1978]).

44. Joe D. Seger, "Field I, Cave 10A, A. Cultural and Historical Summary," in *Gezer V: The Field I Caves* (ed. Joe D. Seger, H. Darrell Lance, and Reuben G. Bullard; = *Annual of the Hebrew Union College* 5; Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, 1988) 47–59, esp. p. 47; Garth Gilmour, "Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine," *NEA* 65 (2002) 112–19, esp. p. 113.

45. Seger, "Field I, Cave 10A," 47.

46. *Ibid.*, 47–48. Of the 88 identified individuals, 32 were children 10 years old or younger; the average age at death for the 57 adults was 27.5. It is thought only 7 lived beyond 35, and of these, only 2 may have reached 55. Half of the remains are of individuals who died between 14 and 24. Of the 57 adults whose remains allowed their sex to be determined, 17 were males and 20 females. There was a high incidence of osteoarthritis in the lower back, sometimes severe, but no malnutrition and good teeth. For the full discussion, see David J. Finkel, "2. Human Skeletal Remains," in *Gezer V: The Field I Caves* (ed. Joe D. Seger, H. Darrell Lance, and Reuben G. Bullard; = *Annual of the Hebrew Union College* 5; Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, 1988) 129–46.

47. Seger, "Field I, Cave 10A," 54.

The metaphorical use of בֹּר to designate the underworld, particularly in poetic contexts, seems to draw on the wider meaning of *bôr* as an unplastered pit excavated into the ground. These pits could be used for many purposes: to store grain, as a wine cellar, to contain rubbish, to contain cultic objects removed from use, as a prison, and for burials. Graves could consist of simple cysts that contained a single individual, a pit to contain an urn burial, or a single chamber or an elaborate, multiroomed burial chamber carved into underground rock that was entered via a shaft that could be sealed off.⁴⁸ The reference to the realm of the dead as a pit evokes in the first instance various forms of interment, but secondarily, the dangers associated with various types of holes in the ground, including wells and cisterns, into which a person or animal could fall inadvertently and die from injuries, exposure, or starvation. It also could evoke the use of a pit or cistern for imprisonment, which might lead to death through neglect.

Examples where “the pit” is used in parallel with She’ol include Isa 14:15; 38:18; Ezek 31:16; Pss 30:4[3]; 88:4–5[3–4], and 7[6]. Instances where it is used in parallel with “the world below” include Ezek 26:20, 31:14, and 32:18. It is used as the location of graves, that is, the underworld, in Ezek 32:23–25. Because the dead normally ‘occupy’ (שָׁכַב) a grave (e.g., Ps 88:6[5]), uses of “the pit” with the verb יָרַד ‘to go down’ or ‘to descend’ are best associated with entry into She’ol, even if there is no mention of the underworld otherwise present. Examples include Isa 14:19; Ezek 32:29–30; Ps 28:1; and 143:7. Finally, a couple of uses are ambiguous; they might mean a pit or the underworld, or perhaps both (e.g., Prov 28:17; Lam 3:53, 55). The uses of *bôr* to designate the underworld appear in contexts that announce divine condemnation and punishment as well laments that call for or praise divine mercy, rescue, and deliverance.

The two uses of בָּאָר in Pss 55:24[23] and 69:16[15] to designate She’ol would seem to draw primarily on the concept of a well’s shaft as a means of entering either an underground burial chamber or as a means of arriving at She’ol. The fear in the latter text of having the mouth of the shaft “closed off” to prevent exit could refer to the placing of a large stone to block the entrance to a chamber tomb or over the top of a well (Gen 29:8) or perhaps, to a fear of the well shaft caving in while the spirit of the deceased is en route to She’ol, trapping it inside in limbo. Thus, there does not seem to be a gratuitous inter-

48. For the various types used in Judah during the Iron Age, see Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (JSOTSup 123; JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series 7; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); Robert Wenning, “Bestattungen im königszeitlichen Juda,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 177 (1997) 82–93; Rüdiger Schmitt, “Care for the Dead in the Context of Household and Family,” in *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012) 429–73, esp. pp. 438–55.

change of *bēʾēr* and *bôr* to designate the underworld of Sheʾol, but rather there is an emphasis on different aspects envisioned of that place: the passageway leading to the entrance as opposed to the giant pit that contained the walled, gated underground city of the dead with its many graves and “houses.”

Conclusion: Cisterns and Wells as Sites of Memories

Cisterns and wells, as underground, dug-out spaces that provided access to collected and flowing water in ancient Judah and Yehud, were important sources of contradictory memories in the Hebrew Bible. On the one hand, cisterns and wells are presented as sources of life-giving and life-sustaining blessing in their provision of water (for example, all settlement names with *bēʾēr* and *bôr*), as spaces for meeting wives and generating new families (Gen 24:11–61; Genesis 29; Exod 2:15–21), for making treaties (Gen 21:22–34; 26:19–33) and metaphorically in the case of wells perhaps, of women’s productivity and fertility (Song 4:13–15). On the other hand, they are presented as sources of danger when left uncovered, when they hold no water or run dry, and in the case of cisterns, when they contain polluted, infested water or when used as a prison with mud in the bottom.

Cisterns and wells evoke the opposites, life and death, although in slightly different ways. On the positive side, cisterns can store collected water that can be used for numerous purposes, including drinking water if necessary. However, on the negative side, stored water can become stagnant and infested and thus cause death to humans or animals that might drink it. Wells, on the other hand, are almost always seen positively, because they give access to fresh underground water. Nevertheless, they also can run dry (Jer 2:13) or cave in, and an unsuspecting person or animal could fall down a well shaft and drown or be trapped there and die unless rescued.

A final binary pair relevant just to cisterns is living, imprisoned bodies and dead bodies. They can be used deliberately as prisons, where people can be held but kept alive by being fed and given water to drink (e.g., Isa 24:22; Jer 37:15–16; 38:1–13; Zech 9:11). Or, as the water evaporates, they can become dangerous mud pits or dry holes in the ground that can trap people or animals who fall into them inadvertently, as in the case of a well, leading to death from starvation, dehydration, and exposure (e.g., Exod 21:33–34; Ps 7:16[15]). In biblical memory, they can also be places where people can be imprisoned and where murdered bodies can be concealed, without proper burial (Gen 37:20–29; Jer 37:15–16; 41:1–9). Cisterns and wells form essential sites for biblical drama, sites where life and death and the struggle with both of them meet and face each other.

PART 3
INDIVIDUAL CITIES AND
SOCIAL MEMORY

Exploring Jerusalem as a Site of Memory in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods

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Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to explore, within the context of the relevant period, matters associated with social memories of Jerusalem. The first section discusses interactions between different ways in which Jerusalem served as a site of memory and contributed to the shaping of other sites of memory and core mnemonic narratives in the community. This section deals also with processes by which material signposts in Jerusalem influenced the discourse of the period and the ways in which Jerusalem was remembered and, conversely, the effect that Jerusalem of the mind had on social and political developments. In other words, it traces connections between material Jerusalems and the Jerusalems of the mind and vice versa. The second part of this chapter explores some of the images and concepts that the site of memory Jerusalem embodied and communicated in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.

Exploring Matters of Social Memory about Jerusalem: Between “Mind” and “Matter,” “Matter” and “Mind,” and Other Considerations

Urban centers, ancient as well as modern, have populated, socially shared memory-scapes. The multiple associations evoked by cities contributed much to social memory and significantly impacted social mindscapes in the ancient

Author's note: This is one of a triad of essays dealing with memories of Jerusalem. The other two are “Remembering Pre-Israelite Jerusalem in Late, Persian Yehud: Mnemonic Preferences, Memories, and Social Imagination,” in *Urban Dreams and Realities: Remains and Representations of the Ancient City* (ed. Adam Kemezis; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming); and “Jerusalem as a Mnemonic System and the Social Mindscape of Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud/Judah,” which is forthcoming in a volume of collected essays edited by F. Amsler and C. Nihan. The research leading to this essay and related works on social memory in ancient Israel has been supported by a grant of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Near East. Ancient cities served as the actual, worldly landscape populated by “material” sites of memory, some of which were personal and others of which were directly and intentionally involved in the shaping of a collective social memory, such as palaces, temples, inscriptions, walls, gates and the like. Cities were sites of social memory in a very different way. Like Babylon or Nineveh, they served as ciphers that activated and communicated various mnemonic worlds as they integrated multiple images, remembered events, and provided a variety of meanings in diverse ancient communities. Within the community that identified or positively associated itself with them, these cities served as ciphers that evoked and communicated a sense of order and construed a past and future that, in turn, played important roles in inner processes of formations of self-identity. These cities embodied and evoked central mythical images and memories that socialized the mnemonic community so that they might share a social mnemonic landscape and a general social mindscape. Social memories affected and to some extent effected not only the way in which people thought and understood the world and themselves but also their actions, including those related to cities. Thus, certain cities emerged to a significant extent the way they did because of social memories; their importance and relevance were at least, in part, the outcome of social memory.

Although cities that serve as sacred cities in “traditional” societies share some important features, whether they are inside or outside the ancient Near East,¹ this essay is primarily about the Jerusalem of the late Persian / Early Hellenistic period.² This city was extremely unlike the very large, central, imperial cities of the ancient Near East in terms of its population, political and economic clout, and even its social organization.³ But it was still a sacred, cen-

1. See, for instance, Diana L. Eck, “The City as a Sacred Center,” in *The City as a Sacred Center. Essays on Six Asian Contexts* (ed. Bardwell Smith and Holly Baker Reynolds; International Studies in Sociology and Social Anthropology 46; Leiden: Brill, 1987) 1–11.

2. Jerusalem has a long history as a central, sacred city before and after the period discussed here. The chapter, as appropriate to the theme of the present volume, is devoted to the late Persian or Early Hellenistic period in Judah/Yehud.

3. For demographic studies about Jerusalem and its surrounding areas during the Persian period, see, among others, Oded Lipschits, “Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations,” *JHS* 9/20 (2009). On-line: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_122.pdf; idem, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), esp. pp. 258–71; idem, “Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries BCE,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 323–76; Israel Finkelstein, “Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder,” *JHS* 9/24 (2009). On-line: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_126.pdf; idem, “Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah,” *JSOT* 32 (2008) 501–20; idem, “Archaeology and the List of Returnees in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah,” *PEQ* 140 (2008) 7–16; Hillel

tral city⁴ for a particular community that, unsurprisingly, thought of it as the central city of a future, worldwide empire they believed would certainly come.

Jerusalem served as a central site of memory in late Persian Yehud in two main ways. On the one hand, it was the site that embodied and brought together in some meaningful way multiple material sites of memory the residents of the period encountered in their daily lives. These sites included, for example, a temple whose building and furnishings were much poorer than other central temples and poorer than the Jerusalemite temples that existed in the memory of the community (see Hag 2:3; compare Ezra 3:12). In fact, this material temple was not considered worthy of much writing and, thus, of much remembering in terms of its building or furnishings, as any comparison with descriptions of other temples or sacred cultic buildings of the past or the future (e.g., Ezekiel 40–44) that existed within the literary repertoire of the community clearly shows (see, for instance, 1 Kings 5–6; compare Exodus 25–28; 35–40).⁵ The temple itself was thus conceptualized as a marker of a post-calamity period, a reminder of a glorious past and of a glorious future that is “not yet.”

Geva, “אומדן אוכלוסיית ירושלים בתקופותיה הקדומות: ההצעה המינימליסטית” [“Estimating Jerusalem’s Population in Antiquity: A Minimalist View,”] *Erlsr* 28 (Teddy Kollek Volume; 2007) 50–65; Amos Kloner, “Jerusalem’s Environs in the Persian Period,” in *New Studies on Jerusalem* (ed. Avraham Faust and Eyal Baruch; Ramat Gan: Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies, 2001) 91–95 [Hebrew]; compare Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Avraham Faust, “Judah in the Sixth Century B.C.E.: A Rural Perspective,” *PEQ* 126 (2003) 37–53. See also a summary of the situation in Kirsi Valkama, “What Do Archaeological Remains Reveal of the Settlements in Judah during the Mid-Sixth Century BCE?” in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 39–59.

4. It is important to stress that “cities” and even central “cities” in this context are not necessarily defined by having a large population (see bibliography in the previous note) or by their being walled. Jerusalem was without a wall when the temple was established, and if at a later stage in the Persian period it was surrounded by a wall, the latter was certainly not a massive defensive wall meant to withstand the attack of any significant army. It is worth noting also that, within the social mindscape of the period, cities had “daughters,” that is, secondary, small and mainly rural settlements. But conceptually, “daughters” belong to the same category as “mothers.” What characterized a central sacred city was neither the size nor the wall but a conceptualization of the city as the place of a “great god,” a place connecting “heaven and earth,” a central place in the divine economy, and the like. This is discussed in the subsection “Jerusalem, Cities, Houses and Cosmos,” below.

5. See David J. A. Clines, “Haggai’s Temple, Constructed, Deconstructed and Reconstructed,” in *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 205; Gender, Culture, Theory 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 46–75 (esp. p. 53); originally published in *SJOT* 7 (1993) 19–30.

One has to assume that ruins were probably seen in the area in and around Jerusalem throughout the Persian period.⁶ These ruins and empty spaces also served to bring home the presence of a past and of its catastrophic fate. These ruins would reinforce a sense that the community is just the “remnant” of a terrible calamity, whose memory probably remained for generations in the community.⁷ The buildings of Jerusalem served to shape a collective memory obsessed with a past calamity, which, within the social mindscape of the community, was tantamount to being obsessed with the importance of YHWH’s past judgment. It also meant obsession with closely related activities such as (a) construing and remembering the actions of Judah and Jerusalem that made them worthy of such a divine punishment within this discourse and (b) construing hope for a restoration that will return not to the prejudgment situation that led to disaster but to a new hopeful, stable future.⁸ The repertoire of books that carried particular authority within the Jerusalem-centered literati in the late Persian / early Hellenistic period particularly reflected these “obsessions.”⁹

6. Compare David Ussishkin, “The Borders and *De Facto* Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 147–66.

7. In a short period, Judah suffered a reduction of 70–75% in its population, and close to 90% in some areas (for example, Jerusalem environs, eastern strip). The city was burned and uninhabited, due to war, famine, associated diseases, deportation, and migration caused by the economic collapse that followed and was engendered by the sociopolitical collapse. Even in Benjamin, which was the least affected of all regions, the population dropped by more than 50%. A catastrophe of this magnitude could not but be remembered and become a site of memory or cipher bearing a weighty significance for generations after the event, particularly among those whose self-identity was grounded in a close identification with those afflicted by the disaster but also within any polity or community that imagined itself and was understood as standing in continuation with the one that had suffered a calamity such as this. See Hermann-Josef Stipp, “The Concept of the Empty Land in Jeremiah 37–43,” in *Concept of Exile* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin) 103–54. He compares this shrinkage of population with that caused by the Thirty Years’ War, which was far less dramatic. To put it in today’s numbers, this would be equivalent to the loss of about 25 million Canadians or more than 230 million Americans (pp. 144–50). It is worth stressing that there was no demographic or economic recovery to anywhere near the level of late monarchic Judah during the Persian and early Hellenistic periods.

8. A social preference toward the development of discourses of hope (and utopian thinking) in this sort of community is to be expected. See my “Reading and Constructing Utopias: Utopia/s and/in the Collection of Authoritative Texts of Late Yehud. General Considerations and Some Observations,” *Studies in Religion* 42 (2013) 463–76.

9. The underlying assumption is that most of the books included today in the Hebrew Bible in more or less their present forms are representative, to at least a significant degree, of the general authoritative repertoire of these literati in the late Persian / early Hellenistic period. This is a reasonable assumption, at least concerning the pentateuchal collection, the Deuteronomistic Historical collection, the prophetic books collection, Chronicles, and most of the psalms and Proverbs.

Within a province that was called Yehud, not Benjamin, even though its demographic and economic center was Benjamin and its political capital was located at Mizpah in Benjamin for a while, memories that reinforced a sense of continuity with the past enjoyed a systemic preference. Persian-period Jerusalem and its temple evoked and shaped memories of monarchic Jerusalem. Moreover, it evoked memories of monarchic Judah. Without a doubt, one may claim that the ideology according to which Jerusalem stood symbolically for Judah was one that would have been particularly promoted by the incipient temple in Jerusalem, with the likely support of the Persian center. Certainly, it had been at the core of monarchic-period discourse and the perception of Judah outside its borders.¹⁰ Yehud could not have rejected this construction without substantially erasing any claims of continuity between Persian Yehud and monarchic Judah.¹¹ The very building of the temple evoked and communicated a sense of continuity with the past temple and thus shaped and reshaped a memory of old Jerusalem in which the temple becomes more important than any other building and institution. This process created a core mnemonic metanarrative from temple to temple that, within the discourse of the period, was also one from David to Cyrus and from monarchic Judah to Achaemenid Yehud. At the same time, it also evoked a sense of a third and final movement, from past temple to present temple to future utopian temple, from monarchic Judah to Persian Empire to YHWH's empire on earth; from David to Cyrus to either an elevated David or Israel (or both) at the center of YHWH's kingdom.

Up to this point, I have referenced ways in which encountering material sites of memory in Jerusalem after the city's destruction in 586 B.C.E. shaped a comprehensive site of material memory that affected the production of the intellectual discourse of the literati, their memories, and their general mindscape. Even these material sites of memory had to be socially construed and encoded, but indisputably, there was a material side to them.

At the same time, material sites of memory were not a necessary requisite for a Jerusalem that existed in the mind and the shared imagination of the community. The memories evoked by such a Jerusalem of the mind, with the temple as its center, were most likely the reason that the temple and eventually, Jerusalem were rebuilt in the Persian period. On the surface, the building of a local temple in the midst of a destroyed, unpopulated and unwalled town in an extremely depopulated area rather than in the local political, social, economic, and demographic center does not make much sense. It is an anomaly, further emphasized by the fact that it required not only local but also imperial

10. So, for example, *ABC* 5, rev. 1. 12. The text is also available in Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (SBLWAW 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004) 230–31.

11. See my "Total Exile, Empty Land and the General Intellectual Discourse in Yehud," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 155–68 (p. 165).

support. The only reason for rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem rather than (re?)building a temple to YHWH elsewhere in the province was the strong existence of a Jerusalem of the mind whose social memories required that YHWH's house be at the place the community remembered YHWH to have selected for that purpose.¹² Building temples in the ancient Near East usually would have occasioned substantial discontinuities with the past,¹³ but they would be construed and accepted as appropriate because they evoked and activated a sense of continuity with a remembered (and thus construed and constantly reshaped) past.¹⁴ The Jerusalem of the mind had a central role in creation of the material Jerusalem of the Persian period.

Of course, various Jerusalems of the mind impacted not only the process of rebuilding an incipient temple but also continued to interact dynamically with the actual city throughout the Persian period. Certainly, repeatedly remembering the preeminence of Jerusalem and its temple likely contributed to the rise of the institution of the temple and, thus, of the city to the position of preeminence it had attained already by the late Persian period.¹⁵ But Jerusalems of

12. For a different position on this matter, see Diana V. Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (Bible World; London: Equinox, 2005). For a response to Edelman's position, see Ralph W. Klein, "Were Joshua, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah Contemporaries? A Response to Diana Edelman's Proposed Late Date for the Second Temple," *JBL* 127 (2008) 697–701.

13. After all, any activity of building or rebuilding brings something "new" that has to be incorporated and "appropriated" by the past. Moreover in most cases, (re)building or even "repairing" involves the removal of something considered to be sacred. For this reason, actions of rebuilding, repairing, or even making minor changes in temples or their sacra may be portrayed as acts of impiety or even sacrilege from the perspective of those who negatively construe and remember the (re)builder/repairer agent (e.g., Ahaz, Naram Sin, Nabonaid, "sinful priests," and so on). See, for instance, Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of His Steles from Harran and Babylon," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 137–66 (pp. 143–44). It is worth noting in this regard that despite the negative characterization of Herod, his (re)building activities were not construed as a sacrilege; instead, his role as (re)builder of the temple was deemphasized in literature from the period close to and following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

14. One may note the emphasis on the literature of the period on the continuity of ritual, personnel (the same lines of priests), sancta (for example, the vessels), sacred space and sacred (cyclical/ritual) time.

15. Contrast even the case of Samaria, the other main Yahwistic province in which there was also a temple. Note the asymmetry between the Samaritan and Yehudite addressees of the letters sent by Jedaniah and his colleagues the priests in Elephantine, which unequivocally points to the high status of the Jerusalemite temple in Yehud by 407 B.C.E. The letters were sent to "Delaiah and Shelemiah, sons of Sanballat, gover-

the mind and social memory did not evolve in a vacuum. They were part of the social memory of a particular historical community and thus historically contingent, both in a narrow and a wider historical sense. The inner Yehudite social processes that led to the religiocultural-political prominence of Jerusalem over Benjamin shaped and drew much attention to Jerusalem as a site of memory. The sociopolitical and cultural location of Yehud in the Persian Empire also affected the shaping of Jerusalem as a site of memory. Persian kings were brought to memory as supporters of the building and appropriate establishment of the temple, as royal figures lending it prestige, and as instruments in the hands of YHWH for these purposes, as the discourse of Yehud required. At the same time, as the last observation already hints, the very same social and cultural location led to processes of hybridization in which cultural patterns associated with “empire” are turned around to support local identity formation and social reproduction, as well as forms of inner social organization. All this contributed to the shaping of images of Jerusalem. The social, political, and cultural location of Yehud entailed constant interplay with Samaria and their respective elites during the Persian period. These matters also influenced the shaping of social memories about Jerusalem and the mindscape they enjoyed within the Yehudite community. The internal social location of the literati writing and reading the texts in which these memories of Jerusalem were encoded and evoked by reading also played important roles, particularly if these literati were likely supported in one way or another by the Jerusalemite temple.

nor of Samaria” and in first instance, to “Jehohanan the High Priest and his colleagues the priests who are in Jerusalem, and to Ostanes the brother of Anani and the nobles of Judah,” and later to Bagavahya, the governor of Yehud. See Bezalel Porten et al., *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 139–49; Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1986–99) 1:68–75 (B19 = TAD A4.7 = Cowley 30; B20 = TAD A.4.8 = Cowley 31). Of course, the very presence of the temple required the presence of priests and various services to maintain the cult; the very presence of collected tribute and taxes in the site, at least from some point in the Persian period that of some human and “material” infrastructure to make whatever was collected safe. All these processes could not but affect the “material” city. On the likely roles of the Persian-period temple, see Joachim Schaper, “The Jerusalem Temple as an Instrument of the Achaemenid Fiscal Administration,” *VT* 45 (1995) 528–39; idem, “The Temple Treasury Committee in the Times of Nehemiah and Ezra,” *VT* 47 (1997) 200–206. The presence of a treasury in Jerusalem may have contributed to the shift of the provincial capital from Mizpah to Jerusalem and the presence of some fortifications. See, for instance, Oded Lipschits, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, 19–52 (p. 40). Compare Christopher Tuplin, “The Administration of the Achaemenid Empire,” in *Coinage and Administration in the Athenian and Persian Empires* (ed. Ian Carradice; BAR International Series 343; Oxford: B.A.R., 1987) 109–66 (pp. 128, 130).

Because I have discussed some of these issues elsewhere, the next section will focus on various aspects of the Jerusalems of the mind of the late Persian/early Hellenistic period rather than on the historical background from which they emerged and with which they interacted and reshaped themselves, though both aspects should be kept in mind.

*Exploring Matters of Social Memory about Jerusalem:
Some of the Central Constructions of “Jerusalem”*

Introduction and Matters of Mindshare

Jerusalem and related terms (for example, Zion) explicitly appear many more than 800 times in works later included in the HB, which most likely were representative of the repertoire of the time. For obvious reasons, Jerusalem could not appear frequently in the Pentateuch or other historiographical narratives shaping memories of a pre-Davidic, pre-Israelite Jerusalem. S. Talmon noticed many years ago that Jerusalem and related terms are proportionally attested more frequently in this corpus than in late-Second Temple literature, when Jerusalem was a much larger city, or in later rabbinic literature, despite Jerusalem’s centrality in rabbinic Judaism, or in the New Testament.¹⁶ The matter is not only numerical; the Deuteronomistic historical collection is largely teleologically oriented toward the catastrophe symbolized by the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Jerusalem stands at the center of the collection of prophetic books. Jerusalem and its temple play a central role in Psalms and in Chronicles. All the basic metanarratives of Yehud involved the past and future fate of Jerusalem.

These observations are indicative of the extent of social mindshare among the literati of the period that Jerusalem occupied—the Jerusalems of the mind and memory. Because this mindshare was comparatively larger in Yehud in the Persian period than it was both in the Second Temple period and when there was no material (Jewish) Jerusalem or temple as in the rabbinic period, the matter does not appear to be simply or mainly a case of extensive communal remembering about what has been lost and will be regained. The difference between late Persian Yehud and the rabbinic period seems to be that Jerusalem and its temple had to strive to achieve centrality in the Persian period, while it was undoubtedly was central in the rabbinic era.

The vast number of references to Jerusalem in the repertoire of the period makes it impossible to undertake here even a basic analysis of Jerusalem as a comprehensive site of memory that embodied and communicated multiple images, at times in tension with each other, and integrated them together under a common cipher that embodied and communicated even more meanings and

16. See Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Biblical Concept of Jerusalem,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 8 (1971) 300–316.

images. The plethora of images, places and contexts in which Jerusalem was evoked and the plethora of manners in which Jerusalem in one way or another was integrated into almost any main metanarrative that existed within the discourse of Yehud makes this sort of endeavor impossible. Thus, I will explore *a few* of the aspects and images that contributed to the construction of this site of memory and to its dominant position in the memory-scape of the community.

Jerusalem, Cities, Houses, Cosmic Order and Divine Wisdom

Creation in the ancient Near East was construed as a “macrocosmic” house. The basic metaphor for social organization was the “house of the father,”¹⁷ and from the macrocosmic perspective, this father/patriarch was the high deity of the group. The “house” included cities, and cities included houses, some of which were houses of deities. All were built/created with wisdom and stood because they were established with wisdom. Houses had to be provisioned and filled with good, appropriate things;¹⁸ if a house is filled with a city or cities, then the latter also should be filled with goods, people, wisdom, and of course, a divine house or houses.

When the divine resident was a high god, then it resided in its house in the city and in the cosmic house at the same time, and a direct connection between the two was construed. The city was included in the house and, at the same time, included it. Moreover, the city was necessary for the maintenance of the house and provided context for it, as the latter was imagined as the central element that filled the city. Conversely, the temple filled the city and the world with the essential goods for its prosperity and maintenance. To illustrate, “En-ki’s ‘house’ is the entire cosmos, which is made prosperous from out the local temple/Abzu with its gifts of life-giving waters.”¹⁹

Closer to our topic and time, but still standing in relation to these then millennia-old conceptual images, YHWH’s future presence in the temple in Jerusalem is associated with fertilizing waters emerging from the place in Ezek 47:1–12 and also with the image of a future fountain in the temple, which

17. See, for instance, J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001); Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 54–66; Raymond C. van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Mesopotamia and Israel,” in *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel* (ed. Richard J. Clifford; SBLSymS 36; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2007) 67–90; reprinted and slightly revised, “Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel” in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Jamie Novotny; AOAT 366; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010) 399–421.

18. See van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House.”

19. Citation from *ibid.*, 401.

appears in texts as different as Joel 4:18; Zech 13:1; 14:8; and Ps 46:5–6 (cf. Isa 33:21). YHWH himself was construed as ‘the fountain of living water’ (מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים; see Jer 2:13; cf. Ps 36:10[9] and also Jer 14:8; 17:13²⁰), so there is nothing strange in a generative grammar that would give rise to images of his house and city containing a fountain of enlivening waters. One may note also that this sort of image carries Edenic connotations and partially construes future Jerusalem as a second Eden.²¹ Within this mnemonic world, the garden thus becomes a city and the city a garden.

To be sure, Jerusalem was construed not only as the source of mythical “water” but also, for example, as the place in which YHWH shines. As a result, it had to be imagined as the site in which מְכַלֵּל יְפִי ‘the perfection of beauty’ was achieved on earth (Ps 50:2). Memories of future Jerusalem as a source of mythical light partially embodying the divine presence, to which nations and rulers (that is, the human world) would come, were reflected in and evoked through the reading of Isa 60:1–3, read in a way informed by Isa 60:19–20.

Multiple, complementary, imaginative acts served to construe memories of utopian Jerusalem. Each of them contributed to and shed light on Jerusalem as a site of memory. Jerusalem was imagined as a fountain of water and of light but also, and in related ways, a fountain of wisdom / divine knowledge for the world. Within the general context of the ancient Near East, the world cannot endure without (divine) wisdom. Within the world of thought of the Jerusalem-centered literati during the late Persian or early Hellenistic period, this wisdom was identified, in part, as YHWH’s instruction.²² Thus, it is not sur-

20. On the double meaning conveyed by the reference to YHWH as מְקוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל in Jer 14:8; 17:13 see, for instance, William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 433.

21. On Jerusalem as Eden, see Terje Stordalen, “Heaven on Earth—Or not? Jerusalem as Eden in Biblical Literature,” in *Beyond Eden: The Biblical Story of Paradise (Genesis 2–3) and Its Reception History* (ed. Konrad Schmid and Christoph Riedweg; FAT 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 28–57, esp. pp. 36–40; and the essay on pp. 115–155 of this volume by Diana Edelman, “Gardens in Biblical Memory.” For a recent comparative study of some images and constructions in the (so-called) Akkadian “apocalypses” and texts such as Ezek 47:1–12; Joel 4:18; and Zech 14:8, see Daniel Bodi, “Les apocalypses akkadiennes et bibliques: Quelques points communs,” *Revue des Études Juives* 169 (2010) 13–36; and Stordalen, “Heaven on Earth.”

22. See, for instance, Deut 4:5–6; Psalm 19; or texts such as Job 28:28 as read within a community in which “fear of YHWH” was understood as (at the very least as) following YHWH’s instruction (e.g., Deut 6:2, 24; 13:5; 17:19; 31:12; 1 Sam 12:14). For the potential impact of this correlation on other texts (e.g., Isa 55:1–5), see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002) 369. For texts likely later than the period discussed here that reflect a similar overlap between wisdom and divine instruction in different ways, compare the language of Ezra 7:14 with that in Ezra 7:25. To be clear, I make the claim not that the concepts of Wisdom and YHWH’s instruction were fully interchangeable during the late Persian / early Hellenistic period but that a most significant ideological overlap existed. As for later periods, for stud-

prising to note that images of a future, utopian Jerusalem associate the establishment of this sort of place with the spread of ‘knowledge’ (דעה) of YHWH (see Isa 11:6–9, 65:17–25).²³ Thus, one finds texts such as כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וְדְבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם ‘For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem’ (Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2).

Within this social mindscape, the image of Wisdom as a city dweller calling to people to adopt her ways (Prov 9:1–6) and preaching in and around the city (see Prov 8:1–3) could not but associate her with both (a) “every city, and even the entirety of the inhabited world”²⁴ and (b) Jerusalem, the space associated with YHWH’s instruction. Divine wisdom is thus cosmic and world-encompassing but also, at least partially, Jerusalem-bound. When construed from the latter perspective, the reference to the heights of the city in Prov 8:2 as the place in which people may encounter Wisdom likely evoked the image of the Jerusalemite temple.²⁵

ies on Sirach and (the book of) Torah, keeping in mind texts such as Sir 24:23, see, for instance, John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 54–61. For the proposal that Sir 24:23 reflects Sirach’s understanding of Deuteronomy, see Gerald T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (BZAW 151; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) 66; and see Sheppard’s discussion of Sir 24:3–29 in 19–71. It is possible that Sirach reflected a reading of the text that preceded him. On the various meanings of *torah* in the late Persian period, see also Moshe Greenberg, “Three Conceptions of the Torah in the Hebrew Scriptures,” *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Erhard Blum, Christian Macholz, and Ekkehard W. Stegemann; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990) 365–78. For a recent epistemological study of the multiple relations between ciphers such as Wisdom and Torah, see Ryan O’Dowd, *The Wisdom of Torah: Epistemology in Deuteronomy and the Wisdom Literature* (FRLANT 225; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009).

23. From the perspective of the late Persian or early Hellenistic period, these two texts informed each other. Significantly, both were associated with the same prophet of old, Isaiah, who was directly associated with Jerusalem. The book of Isaiah reached its compositional form well before Sirach; see Sir 48:18–25, which assumes a memory of the prophet shaped by, and reflecting a reading of the book of Isaiah as a whole and as a book encoding memories about the monarchic-period prophet Isaiah.

24. Michael V. Fox writes in relation to Prov 8:1–3: “The scene and events are atemporal: Wisdom addresses mankind in all cities, inside and outside the city walls, in high places and low grounds, repeatedly and forever. Her city represents every city, and even the entirety of the inhabited world. Ancient Near Eastern mythology often represented the cosmos as a city, and some cities were regarded as microcosms of heaven and earth” (*Proverbs 1–9* [AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000] 267). Compare Leo Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation: The Theology of the Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994) 86–87.

25. See Leo Perdue, *Proverbs* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000) 140. The image of Wisdom at the gates was related to the image and administration of justice, which, if done in a way consistent with divine wisdom, provides

Central cities in the ancient Near East were conceptualized as ordered and ordering sites,²⁶ embodying and providing divine wisdom/knowledge. This construction carried a flip side that impacted on the way in which cities served as sites of memory. When these cities were construed and remembered as being disordered and thus disordering, they had to be imagined as embodying, providing and propagating “folly” or “misleading knowledge.” Given that wisdom / divine knowledge was considered absolutely necessary for the world to endure, the foolish city threatened not only itself but also the world as a whole. The fate of the city was imagined as having larger repercussions.²⁷

Within the discourse of Yehud, on the one hand, matters were exacerbated because YHWH, the only divine being worthy of being called “God,” was construed as having only one possible house/city on earth, and the deity could not remain in an unsuitable house/city. The emerging generative grammar of this discourse led to constructions of an effect on the cosmic level for Israel’s sinfulness (e.g., Jer 4:22–28; Zeph 1:2–3) and a sense that what happened in or around Jerusalem (Judah) is crucial for the fate of an Israel that includes more than Judah (for example, Chronicles). Above all, it led to a sense that a temple-less or Jerusalem-less condition can only be a temporary situation. Within this discourse, YHWH will return to Zion/Jerusalem, the city will (and needs to) be rebuilt, and when this happens, the world will finally reach a stable situation. The city will be recognized worldwide as the sacred center of the world and people will come to it, receive its blessings, and honor it by filling it with all kinds of (voluntary) gifts, thus contributing to the process of its building (for example, Isa 60:1–18; 61:5; Hag 2:6–9; compare Isa 2:3; Jer 3:17; Mic 4:2).²⁸

the harmony and order deemed necessary for the long-term existence of the polity/city. So Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation*, 86.

26. See Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 BC* (2 vols.; London: Routledge, 1995) 2:617.

27. The idea that the fate of a (central) city may affect the cosmos is well attested in the ancient Near East. For an illustration, see, for instance, Jack M. Sasson, “An Apocalyptic Vision from Mari? Speculations on ARM X:9,” *Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires* 1 (1982) 151–67 (p. 164).

28. On the importance of “filling,” see van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House.” All these images of central cities at the center of the world that existed in the ancient Near East relate to and evoke conceptual images of “world empires.” In the case of Babylon or Nineveh, they reflected and related to social constructs of empires as well as to the existence of historical, social, political, and economic empires. In the case of Israel/Yehud, the empire was only one of social imagination, set in the future. But memories of that empire impacted the social mindscape and social memory of the community, which remembered not only the past but also its future, having experienced repeatedly, though vicariously through reading, the shared, communal experience of this future. On the common ancient Near Eastern *topos* of the “city at the center of the world,” see, for instance, the classic discussion of Mario Liverani, “Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts,” *Orientalia* 42 (1973) 178–94 (pp. 189–91; on

The images of Jerusalem discussed in this subsection provide excellent examples of how general cultural patterns and even generative grammars that were most often employed in the service of the ideology of dominant political powers of the area were appropriated and reshaped into motifs at the service of local cultural/ideological resistance. They advanced claims that the true center of the universe was not to be found in the imperial cities but in a poor and seemingly marginal city. Contrary to present and past “global” empires that were centered in these cities, they imaginatively experienced and became acquainted with vignettes of a future empire whose center was Jerusalem. They had memories of this certain future Jerusalemite empire, which will come at some undefined future time but which was already created and consistent with YHWH’s will and the true structure of the cosmos. This type of hybridity contributed to the stability and social reproduction of the community in which it evolved and to the long-term stability of the empire.²⁹

Hierarchies and Gendered Images: A Few Observations

Within the mindscape of the community in Yehud, the focal point, that is, the house of the higher deity, defines the city, and conversely, the city is imagined as the house of the deity.³⁰ Both are construed as the center of the cosmic world and of the earthly world in Yehud.³¹ But again, Jerusalem was not imagined and remembered only through the images evoked by the term *house*. As is well-known, in the ancient Near East cities were construed as female figures.³² Although a full discussion of the discursive implications of these

bringing gifts, see also pp. 191–93.) The motif of bringing gifts to the imperial center is widely and clearly attested, for instance, in neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid royal texts.

29. This is a point that deserves separate analysis. I have discussed these matters in “On Social Memory and Identity Formation in Late Persian Yehud: A Historian’s Viewpoint with a Focus on Prophetic Literature, Chronicles and the Dtr. Historical Collection,” in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (ed. Loius Jonker; FAT 2/53; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 95–148; and more extensively in “The Yehudite Prophetic Books and Imperial Context,” in *Divination, Politics and Ancient Near Eastern Empires* (ed. Jonathan Stökl and Alan Lenzi; ANEM/MACO 7; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014) 145–69.

30. On the blurring of boundaries and terms in relation to Jerusalem, with numerous examples from the Psalms, see Susan Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *Temple Worship in Biblical Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. John Day; LHBOTS 422; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 308–41 (pp. 313–16).

31. E.g., Ezek 5:5. Note also previous references to the central fountain that play on the concept of the fountain at the sacred cosmic center. On this matter, see, for instance, Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14* (AB 25C; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 399.

32. For a discussion of the gender of cities and Jerusalem’s unique attribution of a personified biography, see the essay on pp. 21–40 in this volume by Stéphanie

gendered associations and the ways in which they may shape social mindscape is beyond the scope of the present work,³³ a few considerations suffice for the present purposes. Given the three most common, structural female roles within the ideational “house,” female Jerusalem was to be construed and remembered in the main through the activation of three main generative images: (a) mother, (b) daughter, and (c) wife.³⁴

Jerusalem was explicitly remembered in terms of a mother (e.g., Isa 49:17–18; 54:13). Her children and at times very clearly “sons” are, of course, the residents of the city (whether in the future, past or present) that stands for an Israel. (I will return to this point).

Jerusalem was often remembered in terms of בת ציון ‘daughter/female Zion’ (*passim*) and at times as ‘daughter/female Jerusalem’ בת ירושלם (see 2 Kgs 19:21; Isa 37:22; Zeph 3:14; Zech 9:9; Lam 37:22). The term בת evoked the meaning ‘daughter’, which in turn, evoked “father,” which in this case could only be imagined as YHWH.

Jerusalem was also imagined as YHWH’s wife (Isa 54:5–8; 62:4), just as Israel is in other texts (for example, Hosea 2, and note the “parallel” in Isa 54:5–8). In either case, within the gendered social mindscape of the period, the imagining of the city as female led the community’s generative grammar of imagination to create appropriate males who should “own,” protect, and enjoy her.

Even when YHWH was not necessarily or always imagined as Jerusalem’s husband, the deity was imagined as rejoicing over her. For instance, readers of Isa 65:18–19 encounter a YHWH who “remembers” his future joy in Jerusalem, when he will create her and complete this creation by filling her with joy, goodness, and goods. But there is also Isa 64:4–5:

לֹא־יֵאמָר לָךְ עוֹד עֲזוּבָה וְלֹא־רָצָךְ לֹא־יֵאמָר עוֹד שְׁמָמָה כִּי לָךְ יִקְרָא חֲפָצִי־בָהּ וְלֹא־רָצָךְ
בְּעוֹלָה כִּי־חָפֵץ יְהוָה בָּךְ וְאַרְצָךְ תִּבְעַל:
כִּי־יִבְעַל בַּחֹר בְּתוֹלָה יִבְעֹלוּךְ בָּנֶיךָ וּמִשׁוּשׁ חֲתָן עַל־כֶּלֶה יָשִׁישׁ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

You shall no more be referred to as a forsaken/divorced woman
and your land shall no more be referred as desolate/lack in fertility

Anthonzioz, “Cities of Glory and Cities of Pride: Concepts, Gender, and Images of Cities in Mesopotamia and the Bible.”

33. The bibliography on these issues is extensive. For a recent study, see, for instance, Christl M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008). See also Julia M. O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008) 125–51.

34. The motif of the “promiscuous adulteress” (often referred to as “the whore”) is in this context a negative variant of the “wife” motif. Sinful Israel/Jerusalem was construed and remembered not only as YHWH’s wife but also as “the promiscuous adulteress/whore” who cannot but commit adultery time and again (*passim*). See the ensuing discussion.

but you shall be called "my delight is in her"
 and your land, Married/Intercoursed
 for YHWH delights in you,
 and your land shall be married/intercoursed.
 For as a young man marries / has intercourse with a young woman,
 so shall your sons marry / have intercourse with you,
 and as a groom rejoices over a bride,
 so shall your god rejoice over you.

This text clearly and explicitly advances the image of YHWH as the husband of Jerusalem in a future successful and happy marriage as seen from the perspective of the gendered ideology of the time. But there is more. There is a preferred generative grammar according to which good (male) Israelites are supposed to imitate the deity. Hosea marries Israel and so YHWH. YHWH marries Jerusalem and so the Israelites/Jerusalemites who possess her at the "worldly level" within these utopian (and heavily ideological) acts of imagination. These Jerusalemites/Israelites cannot be other than Jerusalem's sons, that is, her dwellers. The text is not as strange as it may appear at first.³⁵

Within this context of strongly gendered images (and social mindscape), it is also worth mentioning that Jerusalem was construed and remembered as YHWH's beautiful, glorious crown; a royal diadem in YHWH's hand (Isa 62:3; cf. Prov 12:4). It was not imagined as a female deity and could not have been imagined as such within the discourse of the community. However, like its counterpart, Israel, when construed in terms evocative of a marriage of eternal faithfulness to YHWH,³⁶ and certainly, given the image of YHWH's permanent presence in its/her midst, which required holiness, some godly attributes had to be assigned to Jerusalem as well, directly and indirectly (see Isa 1:26; 52:1; Jer 3:17; 31:23; Ezek 48:35—the very conclusion of the book of Ezekiel; Zech 8:3).³⁷

35. If the reference to "your sons" is exchanged with "your builders," no substantial change occurs, because "your builders" are "your sons." On this, see also pp. 212–13.

36. For a recent study that deals with female, marital, queenly, and crown-related images of Jerusalem in Isaiah, which advances the minority position that Jerusalem never becomes a deity, see Christl M. Maier, "Daughter of Zion as Queen and the Iconography of the Female City," in *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean* (ed. Martti Nissinen and Charles E. Carter; FRLANT 233; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 147–62.

37. Given the discourse of the period, when the "female" city was imagined as disordered and thus disordering, as embodying, providing, and propagating "folly" or "misleading knowledge," as rejecting YHWH and so on, it was imagined as a whore. A comprehensive analysis of central sacred cities (Jerusalem, Babylon, Samaria) cannot omit this aspect. But given that the present study does not and cannot attempt any form of comprehensiveness, and given that the motif is well known and has been discussed in many other contributions, it is fully acknowledged but not addressed here. On these

Just as remembering future Israel, remembering the future Jerusalem within the context of the poor, small city provided hope. Moreover, like other utopian images shared by a community, it facilitated an exploration of alternative “realities,” of perceived lacks in the present, and turned a “nowhere” into a “somewhere” that figured prominently in the discourse of the community, which was certain it would become a worldly “somewhere” sometime.

*Divine Creation and Building Jerusalem,
Secondary Human Partners, and Imago Dei: A Few Observations*

Within a discourse in which Jerusalem is construed and remembered as the city of YHWH (e.g., Pss 46:5; 48:2, 9; 87:3; 101:8) that stands at the center of the cosmos and plays cosmic roles such as being its “throne” on earth,³⁸ it is easy to understand why both its destruction (*passim* in prophetic literature and elsewhere) and its building were imagined to require divine intervention. YHWH was imagined as the builder of the city, and two of YHWH’s attributes were ‘creator’ (בִּרְאָה) and ‘builder’ (בִּנְיָה); see, for instance, Isa 65:18–19; Pss 102:17; 147:2;³⁹ cf. Isa 54:5; Ps 51:20). Imagining the cosmic creation of new heavens and a new earth led directly and almost immediately to imagining the creation of a new Jerusalem, both as a place of human dwelling, work, and joy and as a peaceful, Edenic place in which the wolf and the lamb will eat together and the lion will eat straw (Isa 65:17–25).⁴⁰

But building Jerusalem, just as destroying it (*passim*), also required human hands, as the readership of all of these texts knew (e.g., Isa 62:6–7; 2 Chr 36:23; Haggai). Moreover, the process of building Jerusalem could not have been imagined as complete until the city would be filled with all that belongs to her, including not only the temple but also, among other things, walls, goods, pilgrims, and, of course, joy.⁴¹ Within this inner Yehudite discourse, human

issues, see, for instance, Robert P. Carroll, “Whorusalamin: A Tale of Three Cities as Three Sisters,” in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelen van Dijk-Hemmes* (ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra; BibIntS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 67–82 and the works mentioned on p. 210 n. 33 above.

38. See Jer 3:17 and compare 1 Chr 29:23, Ps 132:7, Lam 2:1, and Isa 66:1, which do not negate the need to build and fill the temple and Jerusalem (see the rest of Isaiah 66) but which set these activities within the context of YHWH’s cosmic house that encompasses all. Compare 1 Kings 8.

39. בִּנְיָה יְרוּשָׁלַם יְהוָה in Ps 147:2 probably should be translated ‘the builder of Jerusalem is YHWH’ (cf. New Jerusalem Bible).

40. From the perspective of the intended readership, the imagery in this text is supposed to inform and be informed by Genesis 2–3. The reference to the snake and its eating dust constitute an obvious, textually inscribed signpost connecting this memory of a future Eden/Jerusalem with that of the past Eden (cf. Gen 3:14). Needless to say, this text is supposed to inform and be informed by Isa 11:6–9.

41. Cf. van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House,” esp. pp. 399–404.

beings, both Israelites and non-Israelites, could and at times were imagined as partners with YHWH in building/creating Jerusalem, even if at different levels (e.g., Isaiah 60; 62:6–7; 65:18–24; Haggai; 2 Chr 36:23). There is an element of *imago dei* or correspondence in actions and feelings; note, for instance, the explicit, textually inscribed tendency to construe an intertwining of YHWH's joy and human joy in, for instance, Isa 65:18–19.

Remembering Monarchic Jerusalem: A Few Observations

As a site of memory, Jerusalem embodied and communicated the memories already mentioned above but also memories of a late monarchic city that was emblematic of chaos and the dissolution of divine knowledge and order. It was remembered as a city in which divine instruction and true prophets were rejected, which was justifiably punished and burned down. As mentioned above, memories of catastrophe associated with the fall of monarchic Judah played a very prominent role in the memory-scape of the community, for obvious reasons. One of the most basic and central Yehudite metanarratives moves from sin to punishment involving destruction, exile, and alienation and on to a future Utopia in which YHWH and Israel would be permanently aligned with each other. Remembering Jerusalem was remembering both its past and future, turning Jerusalem into the most memorable site of memory embodying the main narrative of Israel's past and future.

The basic metanarrative appears in multiple forms; it lies at the very core of the prophetic books collection. For instance, the history of Israel is encapsulated in the marital story of Hosea/YHWH and his wife/Israel in Hosea. The woman is Israel. YHWH chose her when she was young (exodus-wilderness) and the couple enjoyed a brief time of faithfulness. She is also a woman who, by nature, cannot but fornicate (that is, sin) and is then punished, but YHWH will bring her back. This time, however, he will provide her with divine attributes that will remove her 'fornicating nature' (אשת זנונים) and allow for a future, stable relationship between them.⁴²

Significantly, the metanarrative was constantly reinforced in Yehud by multiple physical sites of memory in ways that the story of YHWH/Hosea with his wife could not. After all, people lived in a city and general physical environs that reminded them constantly of a former glory and a past calamity. But there was another important difference between the two. In the basic metanarrative encapsulated in Hosea's story, YHWH found his wife when she/Israel went up from Egypt, in the wilderness (Hos 2:16–17). Jerusalem could not evoke that memory, because within the facts about the past that were agreed on within the community, the city becomes Israelite and a site for memory that stands for Israel (in the main) only after David's conquest.

42. See my "Remembering Hosea: The Prophet Hosea as a Site of Memory in Persian Period Yehud," forthcoming in a collective essays volume in honour of a colleague.

Thinking of Jerusalem helps to balance a common narrative of the story of Israel. A new foundational event, the building of the temple, and a new central hero, David (and to some extent Solomon), are added to the very foundational events of Exodus and Sinai and their foundational hero, Moses, even if in a secondary position. An entire historiographical work, Chronicles, in part was aimed at achieving this balance. As a site of memory encapsulating the story of Israel, Jerusalem performs a similar work. It draws attention to the foundational roles of the choice of Jerusalem and of David.

A section of the city and, by extension, at times all of Jerusalem was construed and remembered as *עיר דוד* 'the City of David'.⁴³ The city was remembered as belonging to both David and YHWH and as a site of memory, shaped an *ad hoc* conceptual area shared by both.⁴⁴ Another *ad hoc* conceptual area emerges: YHWH chooses David and YHWH chooses Jerusalem. The chosen city is directly related to the chosen king, and both choices were construed as intertwined (see explicitly 1 Kgs 8:16 // 2 Chr 6:5) in the past and often across time and into the utopian era (see, for instance, Isa 11 as informed by Isa 65:17–25). Both relate to Israel, who is also chosen by YHWH.

To remember Jerusalem as David's city was not only to remember a future, utopian city or even a past utopian city (David's Jerusalem) but also to remember the capital of a monarchic polity. It is to remember the fall of that polity and it is to remember that no Davidide is king of Judah in the present. It is both to be reminded of continuity and discontinuity between the kingdom of

43. E.g., 2 Sam 5:7–9, 6:12; 1 Kgs 8:1; Isa 22:9. On the readership's understanding that Jerusalem is the City of David in 2 Sam 5:7–9 and its potential narratological implications, see, for instance, Jan P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses* (Studia semitica neerlandica 27; Assen: van Gorcum, 1981–93) 162–63. Note also "the Chronicler changed the burial place of King Amaziah of Judah and wrote that he had been buried 'in the city of Judah (בְּעִיר יְהוּדָה)' (2 Chron. 25:28), while his *Vorlage* relates that Amaziah had been buried 'in the city of David (בְּעִיר דָּוִד)' (2 Kgs 14:20)" (Issac Kalimi, "Jerusalem—The Divine City: The Representation of Jerusalem in Chronicles Compared with Earlier and Later Jewish Compositions," in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein* [ed. M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie, and Gary N. Knoppers; JSOTSup 371; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003] 189–205 [p. 191]). For a revised version of this essay as part of a comprehensive elaboration of Kalimi's views about the representation of Jerusalem in Chronicles, see idem, *An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place and Writing* (Assen: van Gorcum, 2005) 85–157. For a different position regarding *עיר דוד* in Chronicles, see Peter Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* (WMANT 42; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973) 61–63, 197.

44. Cf. Diana V. Edelman, "David in Israelite Social Memory," in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 141–57, esp. pp. 148–51.

Judah and the province of Yehud, but of a clear continuity between temple and temple. Significantly, Solomon, the actual builder of the temple, was not construed as a military hero. He fought no wars, just like the leadership of Yehud did not; instead, he was a wise man.⁴⁵

To remember Davidic/Solomonic Jerusalem was to evoke and construe a story about a glorious, Jerusalem-centered, unified Israel under these kings. This story served also to bring together the cultic world of the first foundational past, centered on the Ark, tabernacle, and covenant, with that of the second foundational past when the temple was established and both to the future glorious temple from which light, water, and divine wisdom flow and to whom all flow, while at the same time (ideologically and imaginatively) connecting all of them to the community's, present, Persian-period ('Davidic/Solomonic') temple at the core of their Jerusalem.

But by doing so, the concept and memory of Jerusalem informed and controlled the meaning of the foundational narratives of Exodus and Wilderness that were shared with Samaria in such a way that turned them into unshared and unsharable collections, due to their (exclusivist) Jerusalem-centered perspective (see, for instance, 1 Kgs 8:16 // 2 Chr 6:5). Remembering their Jerusalem together, the literati contributed to their own sense of identity, social cohesion,⁴⁶ claims of unique legitimacy, and set ideological and social boundaries

45. This is consistent with a tendency to deemphasize warrior/military features in main heroes within the discourse and the social memory of late Persian/early Hellenistic Judah/Yehud. This tendency impacted on the (main) ways Moses and Abraham were characterized, and in Chronicles, although David remains a military hero, the emphasis is elsewhere. See also the David of Psalms. Even Joshua is imagined as meditating day and night on ספר התורה 'the book of (YHWH's) instruction' (Josh 1:8). This tendency, with its correlated constructions of "masculinity," is consistent and reflects the mindscape of the literati of a society without any significant military power of its own. Although "traditional" constructions of warrior-like heroes still existed in the period, it is only during the Hasmonean period that this tendency ceases to be dominant. These matters require a separate discussion. I have addressed these issues in relation to remembering Abraham and Moses in the late Persian/early Hellenistic period in my "The Memory of Abraham in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud/Judah" and "Exploring the Memory of Moses 'The Prophet' in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period Yehud/Judah," in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 3–37. A prior version of the former essay has been published in *The Reception and Remembrance of Abraham* (ed. Pernille Carstens and Niels Peter Lemche; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011) 13–60. For Moses, see Thomas Römer, "Moses outside the Torah and the Construction of a Diaspora Identity," *JHS* 8/15 (2008). On-line: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_92.pdf.

46. I discussed the role of "preaching to the choir"-type activities for enhancing social cohesion among the literati in Jerusalem in my "On Social Memory and Identity Formation."

around the remembering community. It was a crucial action in their mnemonic struggles with Samaria, where, by the late Persian period, most worshippers of YHWH in “the land” lived.

The very logic of this process strongly emphasizes Jerusalem’s place as the capital of Israel, not of Judah alone. It is a capital that should be inhabited by all pious Israelites (cf. 1 Chr 9:3; 2 Chr 11:13–16). By doing so, it creates a Yehud that stands for and even is Israel while it reinforces a Jerusalem-centered understanding of what Israel (not Yehud) is and should be.

Balancing Images: A Few Observations

Additional aspects of the Jerusalem of mind and memory can be explored,⁴⁷ but for present purposes, those advanced above suffice. However, an important feature of this Jerusalem cannot be omitted: the ubiquitous presence of balancing images. For example, the unique sacredness of Jerusalem and its role in the divine, cosmic economy shaped a systemic preference to construe the place as designated by YHWH well before David, so that its selection was also understood as essentially independent of David (see, for instance, the association of Jerusalem and Mt. Moriah in 2 Chr 3:1).⁴⁸

Jerusalem is David’s city, but the defining and crucial house in the city, the temple, was built not by him but by the wise Solomon. Chronicles, in turn, balances the memory by emphasizing that David actually provided all that was needed for the temple and set its rules. Many texts bring together the future David and future Jerusalem and associate them with the future, utopian kingdom of YHWH (for example, Isaiah 11). These texts shape memories of a future kingdom that belongs to both David and YHWH, with Jerusalem as its capital. Some texts shape memories of a past Davidic kingdom that was YHWH’s kingdom, without clearly stating anything about the future (see 1 Chr 28:5; 2 Chr 13:8), while many other texts remind readers of a utopian, future Jerusalem and a utopian kingdom of YHWH in which no Davidide appears (for example, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Hosea 14).

Jerusalem is Israel and embodies Israel, but it is also remembered as a non-Israelite city, a late conquest. It is a “Canaanite” city where readers of the authoritative repertoire of the period encounter pious people, including a non-Israelite named Melchizedek who was a priest of אֱלֹהֵי עֵלִיִּן ‘the High God’ (Gen 14:20), which in turn is then balanced by Ps 110:4, which partially Is-

47. For example, the Yehudite, construed memory of remembering Jerusalem then and there when Israel was in Exile; see Ps 137:1–6.

48. This claimed association is at the core of another “front” in the mnemonic struggles between Yehud and Samaria (or their discourses), since Samaritan texts consistently associated Mt. Moriah with Mt. Gerizim. On the struggle over the memory of Mt. Moriah and of Abram, see Isaac Kalimi, *Early Jewish Exegesis and Theological Controversy: Studies in Scriptures in the Shadow of Internal and External Controversies* (Assen: van Gorcum, 2002).

raelitizes the foreign king.⁴⁹ This type of example can be multiplied; another involves Jerusalem in the land of Benjamin but also in Judah; see Josh 15:8, 63; 18:15, and Jerusalem's status as conquered and not conquered in Judg 1:8, 21. Those mentioned above suffice to demonstrate that an element of fuzziness played a part in the construction of Jerusalem as a site of memory, just as in any other site of memory in Yehud.⁵⁰

Final Consideration

The preceding observations demonstrate that the city of Jerusalem was a site of memory that did not necessarily foreground images of busy markets, workers, human houses, or an implied urban characterization of labor. Instead, this site of memory communicated a sense of utopian and eternal cosmic sanctity. As such, Jerusalem had to exist eternally but also had a reality outside historical time, just like its foundational streams of waters.⁵¹ This Jerusalem, which populated and generated texts and evoked memories of past and future events, served as a beacon making sense of the past. It provided hope for the future, facilitating a Jerusalem-centered version of traditional ancient Near Eastern motifs consistent with the discourse of the community. At the same time, it turned a potential cognitive dissonance into an argument sustaining the main tenets of the then-present community while simultaneously contributing to the formation of in-group boundaries that separated the community from other communities of YHWH-worshippers in the vicinity of Yehud as well as the role and centrality of the temple within Yehud.

49. See also Judg 19:11–12. In this text the Jebusites are implicitly construed as better than (some) Israelites.

50. I expanded on this point in my essay "On Social Memory and Identity Formation."

51. Compare Martti Nissinen, "City as Lofty as Heaven: Arbela and Other Cities in Neo-Assyrian Prophecy," in *Every City Shall Be Forsaken: Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSOTSup 330; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 172–209.

The Memory of Samaria in the Books of Kings

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The study of cultural memory has the potential to reinvigorate many of the well-rehearsed positions of critical scholarship on the development and reception of the biblical texts. This approach is relatively new, having been significantly applied to the study of ancient Near Eastern history only in recent decades, but it builds on concepts of social memory first discussed in the academic community in the 19th century. Hegelian notions of the development of historical thought form the basis for understanding how knowledge of the past develops within social groups. Nietzsche's conception of historical memory—a kind of socially moral survival mechanism in nature—provides a model for understanding the mechanics that drive the need for identity within social contexts.

The notion of cultural memory goes beyond this, exploding the concept of individual identity into the broader context of identities within and among cultural groups. It posits that the mechanisms and functions that operate between individuals in social contexts also operate between discrete identities on a cultural level. The operation of cultural memory exists in the realm of social and cultural traditions and involves the interaction between the psyche, consciousness, society, and culture. Individuals participate in the act of remembering a culture by accessing its artifacts of collective memory and thereby manufacture persistent cultural identities in their own contemporary contexts.

The record of cultural memory itself does not define any absolute identities, whether individual or collective. For as much as the artifacts of collective memory ever communicated any delimited concepts of identity, they now stand so removed from the participants in time that their intended communicative meaning is no longer perceivable. The creation of identity, then, is up to individuals who access the record of cultural memory, now divorced from its original social context and meaning, and create their own version of identity through their unique interaction with that record. It is this concept of identity that is central to the study of cultural memory.

From the perspective of late Persian-period Yehud, the record of cultural memory was authoritative in and of itself. All the differing world views manifested in the textual record were simultaneously valid for the remembering

community. The problem for the modern historian lies in determining exactly which texts were considered authoritative and just how authoritative particular texts were in relation to each other. The historian must also contend with the fact that the precise form of the individual texts, as they existed at the time, remains obscured behind a long history of scribal transmission and transmutation.

From the work of canon critics, we know that established collections of authoritative literature existed in this period. Although there is no agreement as to the exact status and form of these collections, the various titles used to refer to them suggest that they can be identified to a large extent with texts we know from the Old Testament today. The most authoritative collection was known as the “Law (or Scroll) of Moses” and was probably largely identical with the Pentateuch as we know it, but with a significant degree of variation in the exact contents (compare the variants among the Qumran scrolls). A collection known as the “Words of the Prophets” was also authoritative, comprising the Minor Prophets, Isaiah, and some form of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. A third collection, less clearly delimited, is to be identified with the Psalms literature, although the precise shape of the collection is unknown.

Many scholars would add some version of the Deuteronomistic History, and perhaps Chronicles, to this list. For example, E. Ben Zvi includes “the Pentateuchal books, the Deuteronomistic historical collection, the book of Chronicles, and most or all of the fifteen prophetic books” within the repertoire of authoritative texts of the late Persian period.¹ Elsewhere, K. L. Noll has argued that the form and reception of the sources for much of the biblical books of Kings in the Persian period were significantly changed in the later Hellenistic period. Building on A. G. Auld’s notion of a common source behind the synoptic Kings/Chronicles material, Noll suggests that the Persian-period Kings material was “composed by and for a small group of scribes who had no interest in disseminating the contents of the text.”²

Certainly, as Ben Zvi points out, the sense of identity that the literati drew from these texts “trickled up and down within the community at large.”³ And

1. He also includes many Psalms. See Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Memory of Abraham in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period Yehud,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 3–37 (pp. 3–4). The essay was originally published under the same title in *The Reception and Remembrance of Abraham* (ed. Pernille Carstens and Niels Peter Lemche; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011) 13–60; see p. 15.

2. Kurt L. Noll, “The Evolution of Genre in the Book of Kings: The Story of Sennacherib and Hezekiah as Example,” in *The Function of Ancient Historiography in Biblical and Cognate Studies* (ed. Patricia G. Kirkpatrick and Timothy Goltz; LHBOTS 489; London: T. & T. Clark, 2008) 30–56 (p. 54).

3. Ben Zvi, “Memory of Abraham,” in *Reception and Remembrance of Abraham*, 15.

we should be wary, contra Noll, of attributing a critically developed understanding of the text to its ancient readers anachronistically. Despite these reservations, it is worth bearing in mind, as Noll rightly points out, that the biblical literature was primarily transmitted and understood within priestly circles, and only secondarily in the context of the broader group.⁴ It is in this way a product of an inherently religious mode of thought—as much as that term carries any special meaning in an ancient context. In reality, ancient societies did not distinguish among the concepts of religion, politics, economy, and so forth, as we do today. However, it still seems fair to say that ways of thinking that we would understand as inherently religious were integral to the shaping of the literature and culture that the biblical texts reflect. This may seem like an obvious statement, but it has important implications for how we can understand the mental processes behind the literature itself and, thus, it can potentially tell us something about its authors.

Anthropologists and cognitive psychologists have for some time been engaged in explaining the phenomenon of religious thinking from a broad and interdisciplinary perspective. Combining studies in anthropology, evolutionary science, and cognitive psychology, theorists of religion have fine-tuned a number of ideas about what makes human beings especially adapted to supernatural or religious thinking. Some scholars have developed some convincing scientific explanations as to why this is so.⁵ Importantly, these studies often contradict the sorts of models that scholars intuitively construct to explain religious thinking.⁶ Instead, they encourage us to reach beyond what J. A. Lanman has called “*a priori*, intuitive, and introspective theorising about the mind” and look toward theories for the development of memory within the texts that are supported by other bodies of evidence.⁷

I will introduce two theoretical concepts before getting to the text itself. The first is the notion of modes of religiosity, which has been pioneered by the anthropologist H. Whitehouse. He divides patterns of thinking about religious phenomena into essentially two systems, which he calls the imagistic mode and the doctrinal mode.⁸ Religion in the imagistic mode, and its associated

4. See, Kurt L. Noll, “Is the Book of Kings Deuteronomistic? And Is It a History?,” *SJOT* 21 (2007) 49–72. See also idem, “Evolution of Genre in Book of Kings.”

5. I am referring specifically to the work of Pascal Boyer, Ilkka Pyysiäinen, Harvey Whitehouse, E. Thomas Lawson, and Robert N. McCauley, although the topic is widely discussed by many scholars.

6. Pascal Boyer has a great deal on this problem (*Religion Explained: The Human Instincts That Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* [London: Vintage, 2002] 1–57).

7. Jonathan A. Lanman, “How ‘Natives’ Don’t Think: The Apotheosis of Overinterpretation,” in *Religion, Anthropology, and Cognitive Science* (ed. Harvey Whitehouse and James Laidlaw; Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2004) 105–32, esp. p. 105.

8. See Harvey Whitehouse, *Inside the Cult: Religious Innovation and Transmission in Papua New Guinea* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995); idem, *Arguments and Icons*

conceptualization in what psychologists call episodic memory, refers to a pattern of thinking that is fixed in the mind by the weight of a single traumatic impression. For this reason, it is inherently simplistic and is difficult to transfer beyond the individual or group that has direct experience of its formative event. In contrast, religion in the doctrinal mode, conceptualized in what is known as semantic memory, is implanted over time through repetition and tuition. Memories implanted this way can be very complex and are highly transferrable, because they are impressed with regularity of form and constant reiteration. All of the biblical material can be understood as religion in the doctrinal mode.

The second idea I will mention is the cycle of corrupted doctrine and doctrinal revival.⁹ This essentially alludes to a phenomenon in Whitehouse's theory in which the tedium of doctrinal religiosity brings about a fracturing of the religious system and a degeneration of the cohesiveness of doctrine.¹⁰ I. Pyyiäinen theorizes that this leads to a doctrinal revival, in which a more restrictive and fundamentalist interpretation of the previous doctrine emerges. The product of this process is the re-presentation of the old religion in a new doctrinal form.

In the remainder of this essay, I would like to explore how Whitehouse's theory of corrupted doctrine and Pyyiäinen's theory of doctrinal revival could help explain the construction of the memory of Samaria in the book of Kings. In biblical studies, source-critical models have for a long while perceived different layers in the text of Kings, which are thought to stem from early materials such as annalistic records, campaign texts, royal ascension narratives, and so on. These early sources were theoretically combined into doctrinal materials that brought the disparate sources together to create cohesive national myths. Source critics have also proposed that these doctrinal materials were eventually abandoned and restructured as newly formulated claims to represent the past from the perspective of "a present" grounded in the Persian era.

This re-presentation of the past is often characteristically different from the old formulation, but it claims authority by association with that previous doctrinal material all the same. The past is, after all, not infinitely interpretable and malleable in the hands of those communicating it in the present. Rather, it is restricted and must conform to particular standards that are imposed by the

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and idem, *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission* (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004).

9. Ilkka Pyyiäinen, "Corrupt Doctrine and Doctrinal Revival: On the Nature and Limits of the Modes Theory," in *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History, and Cognition* (ed. Harvey Whitehouse and Luther H. Martin; Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004) 173–94.

10. Pyyiäinen connects this process with the emotionalization of religious experience, which is natural to human engagement with religions in the doctrinal mode. See Ilkka Pyyiäinen, *How Religion Works: Towards a New Cognitive Science of Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 140–42.

recipient community.¹¹ To assert the authority of the new doctrine, old material is constantly recycled, restated, and subtly reframed by those writing it into the present. In the biblical text, we see this process again and again, as has been long recognized by scholars of literary-critical approaches. However, framing the layers of the text within the discourse of anthropology and theories of cognition is less common in biblical studies and is an approach that deserves more attention.

Examples of the older layers of doctrinal material that concern the city of Samaria may be found in the stories of the foundation of the Omride dynasty, the establishment of the city of Samaria itself, and the wars fought against the Damascene powers to the northeast. 1 Kings 16:11–12, 15–19, and 21–24 contain the vestiges of doctrinal modality that deals with the establishment of the city after the coup of Zimri and the royal investiture of Omri by the people, which may well have been a pretext of later Northern rulers who sought a validating narrative for their regime. These memories recall that Omri founded a dynasty and built a new capital at Samaria.¹² Earlier doctrinal material may well have included details that were anachronistically transposed into narratives about later Northern kings such as Ahab or Jehu¹³ or about Solomon.¹⁴

In other texts, the displacement of the records of campaigns of Israel against Damascus is evident, such as Jeroboam's war against Ben-Hadad in 1 Kings 15 and Ahab's coalition with Jehoshaphat in 1 Kings 22.¹⁵ The incorporation of

11. See John D. Y. Peel, "Making History: The Past in The Ijesho Present," *Man* 19 (1984) 111–32; and Arjun Appadurai, "The Past as a Scarce Resource," *Man* 16 (1981) 201–19. These scholars made significant adjustment to concepts originally discussed by Bronislaw Malinowski (*Magic, Science and Religion, and Other Essays* [London: Souvenir, 1974] 72–124) and the restatement of Malinowski's position in Laura Bohannon, "A Genealogical Charter," *Africa* 23 (1952) 301–15.

12. There was more than a royal compound in Omride Samaria. According to Finkelstein, the lower town is also to be dated to that period. Some of these buildings or sections of buildings were built in Omri's reign, and others likely in Ahab's. The royal palace in Samaria ended up being truly monumental for the region. On Omride Samaria, see Israel Finkelstein, *Le royaume biblique oublié* (Paris: Jacob, 2013) 142–52. See also idem, *The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel: The Forgotten Kingdom* (ANEM/MACO 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013). Compare Norma Franklin, "Samaria: From the Bedrock to the Omride Palace," *Levant* 36 (2004) 189–202.

13. Note how the historical "House of Omri" becomes the "House of Ahab" in biblical historiography.

14. See E. Axel Knauf, "King Solomon's Copper Supply," in *Phoenicia and the Bible: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Leuven on the 15th and 16th of March 1990* (ed. E. Lipiński; Studia Phoenicia 11; Leuven: Peeters, 1991) 167–86.

15. See recently Israel Finkelstein, "Stages in the Territorial Expansion of the Northern Kingdom," *VT* 61 (2011) 230–31. Previously, J. Maxwell Miller suggested that the events in 1 Kings 22 and 2 Kings 3 should be located in the reigns of Jehoram

the Elijah/Elisha cycle into its present position within the book is an example of the revival of older materials in a new doctrinal format. The older material in 1 Kings 20 and 22, which essentially is sympathetic to Northern rulership, is reframed in the Elijah/Elisha cycle to undermine Samaria and its institutions.¹⁶ The close association between the Omride rulers and Ba'al worship is a constant feature of the reframed Elijah/Elisha cycle that is foreshadowed in the introduction to the reign of Ahab in 1 Kgs 16:30–33. In these four verses, we read that Ahab worshiped Ba'al, built the altar and temple to Ba'al at Samaria, perpetuated the sin of Jeroboam, and took a foreign wife. Each of these features triggered powerful responses in the memories of those in receipt of the text, firmly locating the degeneration of national worship and rulership in Samaria.

In its revived form, the material that concerns Samaria in the books of Kings has been redrafted to polemicize the relationship between that city and the city of Jerusalem. As the model Northern city, Samaria represents a kind of anti-Jerusalem, the royal capital of the corrupted Northern Kingdom. It constitutes a symbol of Israel's rejection of YHWH. The purchase of the hill of Shemer by Omri in 1 Kgs 16:24 is juxtaposed with the story of David's purchase of the threshing floor of Araunah, the site of the temple in Jerusalem, in 2 Sam 24:18–25. Samaria is bought for the price of 2 shekels of silver, while Jerusalem is bought for 50. The foundation of Samaria follows the previous royal residences at Shechem, Penuel, and Tirzah. In contrast, Judah's capital is permanent from the ascension of David to the kingship of all Israel, and its temple is built on a single site and never moves—it is the site chosen by YHWH to place his name.

As the book moves chronologically forward beyond the fall of Samaria, it is Jerusalem that comes explicitly to symbolize the rejection of YHWH's laws and the corruption of his chosen people and city. In many ways, it is this ultimate view of Jerusalem as the center of a corrupted nation that colors the entire discourse earlier in the book concerning Samaria. The negative portrayal of Samaria is, in fact, a response to the demise of Jerusalem. The Northern capital is presented consistently as an inverse of YHWH's chosen city in terms of its foundation, its rulership, and the character of its cult.

This idea appeals to a type of thought that humans have evolved special machinery to acquire and maintain. There are a number of concepts from anthropology and cognitive psychology that contribute to this understanding of

and Jehu, around the end of the ninth or the early 8th century ("The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars," *JBL* 85 [1966] 441–54 [p. 441], with bibliography). See also Charles F. Whitely, "The Deuteronomistic Presentation of the House of Omri," *VT* 2 (1952) 137–52, esp. pp. 144–45.

16. See Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

memory, but probably the most important is known as cognitively optimal and cognitively costly representation. Cognitively optimal representations are ideas about religion that fit well inside intuitive notions of what we expect to encounter in nature. They can be intuited or accepted on analogy with other concepts familiar to the psyche. In contrast, cognitively costly representations are ideas that go against what one intuitively expects from the world.¹⁷ Costly representations must be maintained by long-term psychological investment via tuition and repetition, such as by religion in the doctrinal mode.

Two other facets of human cognition are important here. First, we very easily attach special meaning to things that fit into our preconceived notions of the world but that, at the same time, present something novel and potentially interesting.¹⁸ Second, human beings seem universally disposed to attribute good or bad intent to the effects we see as caused by seen or unseen actors in nature and, by analogy, in the supernatural systems that individual cultures construct.¹⁹ The overarching ideology that can be seen in the Deuteronomistic layer of Kings is that Jerusalem is potentially good—elected by YHWH—while Samaria is inevitably bad—rejected by YHWH. The same goes for the rulers and institutions associated with these cities, which provides the point of comparison between the two host kingdoms, Israel and Judah.

What is at play here is that cognitively optimal representations of acceptance and rejection, understood as right and wrong or good and bad, are notions that are applied to the memory of the two cities as a way of identifying these physical locations with the very idea of right and wrong. What makes these memories all the more effective is their ability to combine cognitively optimal and cognitively costly representations through the use of a novel and potentially interesting format. The construction of Jerusalem as sanctioned and Samaria as rejected creates an easy way to conceptualize the interaction of two competing concepts of identity. It coordinates with the framework that the human brain has evolved for dealing with delineation and opposition. The transference of this notion into a supernatural realm, by aligning the deity with one city and pitting it against the other, locks the notion in memory by exploiting human cognitive predispositions.

The question is, how do these particular associations develop in a community? Why is it that Samaria is bad? I have already pointed out possible

17. Whitehouse, *Inside the Cult*, 194–99; idem, *Arguments and Icons*, *passim*; idem, *Modes of Religiosity*, 63–86.

18. Pascal Boyer, “Religious Thought and Behaviour as By-Products of Brain Function,” *Trends in Cognitive Science* 7/3 (2003) 119–24; idem, “Explaining Religious Ideas: Elements of a Cognitive Approach,” *Numen* 39 (1992) 27–57.

19. Such notions reflect directly on interaction between individuals and the formation of social bonds, a point already recognized by Nietzsche in his *Genealogy of Morals*. The evolution of moral constructs in relation to the notion of supernatural omniscience and omnivalence is fully explored in Boyer (*Religion Explained*, 192–218).

examples of former doctrinal material that posited an indifference to, or even preference for, the role of Samaria, so how is it that the city would come to embody the antithetical concept of a city in the revived doctrinal material? I think the answer to this question can be found by relating this position to the theory of minimal group paradigms proposed by H. Tajfel.²⁰ He found that groups in society tend toward differentiation and conflict, even when there was no competition for physical resources. The desire for differentiation between “in” and “out” groups within a population drives a phenomenon of communal polarization, where groups that are very similar go to great lengths to differentiate themselves from one another. The reason for this seems to be that groups that are similar are threatened by the prospect of mutual assimilation and the loss of individual identity. In this situation, identity itself becomes a resource over which minimal groups compete.

In the Persian period, both Jerusalem and Samaria had several significant similarities and enough critical differences to make these two cities prone to minimal grouping. Each centre had an institutionalized cult apparatus that was centred on Yahwistic worship. Each seems to have associated itself with a national identity from the central Levantine hill country that was collectively known as Israel, and each shared a national prestige language that differentiated it from the other nations surrounding it, such as Aram, Ammon, Moab, Philistia, and Phoenicia.

But there were some very important differences. The cult in the North was disassociated from the administrative center in Samaria and located instead at Mt. Gerizim. It is possible that in the previous period, the Northern polity had been organized in a diffuse style more generally, with political and cult structures in Samaria, Shechem, Bethel, Shiloh, and perhaps other places. This mode of administration may have conflicted with the centralization in Jerusalem of both the administrative and cultic institutions. Perhaps the competing claims to cultic and economic authority, both of which were angled toward Jerusalem in the South but toward Mt. Gerizim and Samaria in the North, were a catalyst for the type of polemic reflected in the books of Kings.

In Kings, this polemic is expressed in the so-called Deuteronomistic additions to the text, which seek to align Samaria and its rulership with the sin of Jeroboam and the worship of the cult of Baʿal. Also, an attempt to undermine the integrity of the rulers of Samaria and the ethnic background of its populace permeates this literature. This is often achieved by the use of specific language. One of the most commonly occurring themes is that of the sin of Jeroboam, which in 1 Kings 11–12 is associated with the transgression of regulations in Deuteronomy, with the inversion of important phrases such as “listen to my commandments” and “do right in the eyes of YHWH,” with the incident of the

20. Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 223–30.

golden calf in Exodus, and with the notion of an improper cultic apparatus. These associations were ostensibly deeply connected with notions of cultic propriety in the memories of Yehud's literate elite. Those familiar with terminology from the deuteronomic tradition, episodes in the Exodus and Sinai traditions, and doctrinal religious precepts in the priestly traditions preserved in Leviticus would have made these associations.²¹

The idea of the sin of Jeroboam is linked with all the rulers of the North, especially those who rule from Samaria. Thus, the illegitimacy of the Northern ritual tradition is reinforced by repeated accusations of the perpetuation of Jeroboam's sin leveled against successive Samarian rulers.²² Even when a ruler in the North performs an act that ostensibly is seen in a favorable light, the city itself remains deeply associated with prohibited cult practices. Thus, following the description of Jehoahaz's appeal to YHWH and YHWH's positive response to his entreaty, we still read that "[Israel] did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam . . . and also the Asherah stood in Samaria" (2 Kgs 13:6).

Worship at forbidden high places in general, and of Ba'al in particular, are strongly associated with Samaria. The association is made explicit in the description of Ahijah's curse against the high places in Bethel and the extension of the curse to "all the houses of the high places in Samaria" in 1 Kgs 13:32. This trigger in memory links across entirely different temporal points to create associations between cultic infraction and Samaria at a stage in the narrative when the city has not even been built. In the patterning of memory that the text enforces, conceptual associations were elevated beyond chronological associations.

The main objection to the cult and its apparatus in Samaria is summarized in 2 Kgs 18:9–12, which repeats the assertion that Samaria's demise was a result of its rejection of the covenant with YHWH in its refusal to listen to his voice and to all of the commandments of his servant Moses. This evokes some central precepts of deuteronomic thought that were ingrained deeply in the semantic memory of the literate elite through the deuteronomic tradition.²³ The longer presentation of this objection in 2 Kgs 17:7–18, 20–23 is reinforced

21. See 1 Kgs 11:38; Deut 11:13, 27–28; 12:28. On the link to the golden calf in the Exodus tradition, see Exod 32:5 and 1 Kgs 12:28–33. The latter pericope also includes an accusation of improper cultic calendar attributed to Jeroboam. See Aaron Aberbach and Leivy Smolar, "Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves," *JBL* 86 (1967) 129–40, esp. p. 130.

22. 2 Kgs 3:3 (Jehoram); 10:29 (Jehu); 13:2 (Jehoahaz); 13:11 (Joash); 14:24 (Jeroboam II); 15:9 (Zachariah); 15:18 (Menahem); 15:24 (Pekahiah); 15:28 (Pekah). Only two Samarian kings, Shallum ben Jabesh and Hoshea ben Elah, escape direct association with the sin of Jeroboam.

23. The implantation of the central tenets of deuteronomic thought is envisioned in the text itself and would have been a basic part of any community of scribes who held the text in high regard. See the instruction to indoctrinate the text itself in Deuteronomy 4

in vv. 24–41, when the identity of Samaria is finally robbed of its native Israelite status and replaced by foreign ethnicities regarded as entirely distant, both culturally and religiously, from the South. Even the reinstatement of Yahwistic worship in Samaria following the Assyrian assault is associated not with proper Jerusalemite priestly traditions but instead, is connected with Bethel (2 Kgs 17:28). The final impression here undermines the competing Northern temple and competing Northern capital city in the Persian period by creating a memory of its population and its cult as a collection of disparate foreigners schooled in a corrupted form of the true Jerusalemite cult.

One or two very brief things about the memory of Samaria in a few of the prophetic books are in order before concluding. In general, the authors of the prophetic books hold out more hope for Samaria than the Deuteronomists did. Just as there is an ultimate hope for Jerusalem, First Isaiah sees the downfall of Samaria's political and cultic infrastructure as a precursor to the revivification of Israel's identity within the Davidic circle.²⁴ Similarly, warnings in Amos are leveled against both Israel and Judah, along with the other nations, but in the end, the writer sees the fall of Samaria as portending the reestablishment of the United Kingdom.²⁵

In Jeremiah, the comparison between Jerusalem and Samaria is colored with language and motifs that connect with the deuteronomic material, but here the integration of the North back into the Jerusalemite cult is encouraged.²⁶ The representation of Samaria and Jerusalem in Ezekiel also reflects little of the minimal grouping that so colors Kings.²⁷ Rather, the fate of Jerusalem mirrors the fate of Samaria. The key theme is one of comparison of the two cities as destined to undergo similar punishments.

Between the deuteronomic and the prophetic approaches to the memory of Samaria, the emergent theme is one that sees Jerusalem's fate ultimately foreshadowed by that of the North. Perhaps the representation of the North is

and the doctrine that is explicitly evoked in 2 Kgs 18:9–12, in Deut 8:20; 13:18; 15:5; 27:10; 28:1, 15, 45, 62; 30:10.

24. See especially Isa 9:14–16; 10:18–20, in which Samaria is restored with its “head and tail” removed.

25. See Amos 6:9 (the destroyed house of 10 men), and 9:11 (the restored *succoth* of David).

26. This is in contrast to the attitude expressed in Kings that sees the North as essentially foreign and unrecoverable. YHWH tells those in the North, “I have been married’ to you (בעלתי) . . . and I will bring you to Zion” (Jer 3:14). The Northern polity is told to replace Ba'al with YHWH and Samaria with Jerusalem.

27. The primary example is found in Ezekiel 23, but see also the same theme combined with a third city, Sodom, in Ezekiel 16, and see Jer 3:6–10. The latter juxtaposition of the three cities goes against a typical literary model in the biblical text that cast cities as binary pairs. See Amos Frisch, “Jerusalem and Its Parallels,” *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 32 (1994) 81–95, esp. pp. 93–94.

ultimately colored by what befell Jerusalem. Through the effects of memory, of attributing supernatural agency to historical events and perceiving right and wrong in the process of cause and effect, the fate of Jerusalem was imagined necessarily to have been the same one suffered by Samaria. Certainly, one could say that those involved with producing and reading the texts had potential sources of memory or had access to engage with what F. Landy refers to as a “poetics of memory,” which offered alternative points of access to the memory of the Northern capital.²⁸ These memories reframed a preexisting set of memories, recasting a national history in terms of an international, or one might say, intranational polemic. This tension provoked a range of responses and interpretations of the old memories in their new contexts. In one respect, Samaria was the anti-city of Jerusalem, but in another, the two cities were sisters who shared the same fate as estranged wives of YHWH, seeking reunification with their husband, their *ba'al*. These notions need not have been exclusive in the minds of those reading and rereading the texts. Indeed, the memories of Samaria that existed in the minds of the literate elite in Yehud utilized effective methods of memorization that would have encouraged the coexistence of the two memories within the national psyche. National identity, as we all know, need not be consistent but must be cohesive. Human memory has evolved a tremendous capacity for eliding consistency in order to maintain a sense of cohesiveness. The biblical texts, as products of human and cultural memory, show us exactly this.

28. I have borrowed this phrase from Francis Landy. See his “Notes Towards a Poetics of Memory in Ancient Israel,” *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 331–45.

How to Slander the Memory of Shechem

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Our knowledge regarding Shechem enables us to draw its history as a series of ups and downs from the first half of the second millennium B.C.E. until the present.¹ Nor is there any doubt regarding the identity of Tell Balatah as the ancient city beside modern Shechem.² Its topographical location on the north-south route through the central highlands explains its importance, just as its place in the valley between the “shoulders” of the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal explains its name (‘shoulder’ = *šekem* in Hebrew).³

This essay will neither present a systematic history of the town nor focus on its archeology; instead, it will explore its place in the collective memory of Israel as revealed in biblical texts. With this end in view, my work is divided into two parts: the first is factually descriptive, based on the biblical sequence and

1. See George E. Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965). See also Shmuel Ahituv, “Shechem, a. History,” in *Encyclopaedia Miqra’it* (ed. Benjamin Mazar et al.; 9 vols.; Jerusalem: Bialik, 1950–82) 7:662–70 [Hebrew]; and George E. Wright, “Shechem, b. Excavations,” in *Encyclopaedia Miqra’it* 7:670–76 [Hebrew]. See more recently the brief summation of William G. Dever, “4. Shechem,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. Katharine Sakerfeld et al.; 5 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–9) 5:218–21. On the dispute over dating stratum XI to the 10th century B.C.E. and not the 12th, see Israel Finkelstein, “Shechem in the Late Bronze and the Iron I,” in *Timelines: Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak* (ed. Ernst Czerny et al.; OLA 149; Leuven: Peeters, 2006) 349–56.

2. See Wright, *Shechem*, 4–8; Ahituv states that the identification with Tell Balatah is clear (“Shechem,” 662).

3. See John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; 2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963) 507; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1966) 413–14. However, Gunkel emphasizes that “Moderns understand שכם to mean ‘mountain range,’ which is never meant.” He argues that “One must remain with the meaning ‘shoulder’: Jacob pretends that, as he, the head of the household, divides the pieces among his sons in a זבח [‘sacrifice’], he gives the favored son a shoulder piece in addition to his portion.” See Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1977) 449–50. But Ahituv explains that “the meaning of the name ‘Shechem,’ [is] because it is located between two mountains Gerizim and Ebal” (“Shechem,” 670).

noting the contexts in which Shechem is mentioned, and the second contains my assumptions based on critical research designed to clarify the first part.

Contexts Mentioning Shechem in Their Biblical Sequence

The Book of Genesis

In the Tetrateuch Shechem is mentioned only in Genesis.⁴ A glance at the references there shows that Shechem is both a place name (Gen 12:6; 33:18; 35:4; 37:13–14) and the eponymous name of a man identified with the place (33:19; 34:2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 18, 20, 24, 26 [twice]; see also Josh 24:32), which reveals its central role in the narratives of the Patriarchs. Of the 63 references to it in the Bible, 18—almost a third—are linked to narratives of the patriarchal era. Abraham builds his first altar near Shechem (12:6–7). On his return from Paddan-Aram, Jacob buys land near Shechem, where he pitches his tent and builds an altar (33:18–19).

However, along with these events that sanctify the town and its surroundings as a place of worship in patriarchal times and cult, two other episodes in Genesis place it under a heavy shadow. One is the rape of Dinah in Shechem and her brothers' vengeance on the town's inhabitants (chap. 34); the other is the burial of the alien gods under the terebinth near Shechem (35:2–4).

The Deuteronomistic History

Following Noth, this corpus begins in the book of Deuteronomy and ends in the book of Kings.⁵ The major surprise here is in the texts that mention Shechem as opposed to those that omit it.

Deuteronomy

As a city, Shechem is absent from the book of Deuteronomy, although its immediate environs, Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, are the background for the blessing and the curse “by the oaks of Moreh” (Deut 11:30).⁶ Similarly, in Deuteronomy 27, which repeats extensively what was said in Deut 11:29–32, and in Josh 8:30–35, which implements the divinely commanded ratification ceremony, only the mountains are mentioned, and the name of the city between them is absent.

4. For a detailed analysis of the Shechem traditions in the Hebrew Bible, see Eduard Nielsen, *Shechem: A Traditio-Historical Investigation* (2nd ed.; Copenhagen: Gad, 1959).

5. Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981).

6. The Samaritan version of this verse is “by the oak of Moreh near Shechem.” According to Richard D. Nelson, “The detailed geographic concern is jarring and suggests that v. 29 (and v. 30) is a redactional insertion intended to lay the groundwork for chapter 27” (*Deuteronomy: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002] 135–36).

The Book of Joshua

There are six references to Shechem as a place in Joshua: as the border of Manasseh's inheritance with Ephraim's (Josh 17:7), as a city of refuge (20:7) and a city of the Levites (Josh 21:21 and in 1 Chr 6:52), as a place of assembly where law and judgment are handed down (Josh 24:1, 25), and as the resting place of Joseph's bones (Josh 24:32).⁷ In these texts, Shechem is linked neither to the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal nor to the ceremony connected with them (8:30–35), as commanded in Deuteronomy 27.

Moreover, one cannot ignore the absence of a story about the conquest of Shechem in the description of the central campaign of conquest of the western part of the land (Josh 6:1–12:24). According to the conquest story, Shechem is not involved in any coalition of state-cities against Joshua, nor is the town mentioned in the list of the conquered cities and their kings that Joshua defeated (Josh 12:7–24). This gap raises a question: how could all the people of Israel perform the covenant ceremony in front of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim (Josh 8:30–35), if the area was not conquered?

The Book of Judges

Shechem is mentioned in Judges no fewer than 24 times, mainly in the negative context of Abimelech's destructive kingship.⁸ This indicates its link to Gideon, the leader from the tribe of Manasseh: "Gideon had seventy sons of his own issue, for he had many wives. A son was also born to him by his concubine in Shechem, and he named him Abimelech" (Judg 8:30–31). According to other texts, the city appears to be connected more closely with the tribe of Ephraim (Josh 21:21; 1 Chr 6:52; 7:28).⁹ We are even told that there was a temple in Shechem dedicated to Ba'al, the god of the covenant (Judg 9:4, 27; see also 8:33).

The Book of Kings

Here Shechem is mentioned only in relation to the division of the United Kingdom, either as the place Rehoboam was crowned (1 Kgs 12:1 [twice] / 2 Chr 10:1) or as the first capital of Jeroboam son of Nebat the Ephraimite (1 Kgs 12:25), before he went on to strengthen other towns such as Peniel, Bethel, Dan, and Tirzah (1 Kgs 12:25, 29; 14:17). From then on, Shechem remains absent throughout the entire book of Kings, meaning the entire history of the Kingdom of Israel, despite archeological evidence confirming that

7. In Josh 17:2, Shechem appears as a son of Manasseh and thus represents a clan, while in 24:32 we meet the name Shechem again as a personal name.

8. Shechem appears as a private name twice in the story of Abimelech (Judg 9:28) and, otherwise, only one more time in the book, as a town in the detailed geographical description of the location of Shiloh (21:19).

9. Sometimes the context indicates Shechem is located in the land of Ephraim; Joshua was buried in Shechem (Josh 24:32) and he was an Ephraimite (Num 13:8, 16).

the city prospered economically in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.E.¹⁰ After the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians, the city continued to exist but as a small, poor, almost abandoned place.¹¹ From the middle of the 5th century B.C.E., however, Mt. Gerizim, which was situated south of the town and connected with the idea of blessing, became an important religious center for the Northern population who worshiped YHWH.¹² They were later called “Samaritans” because of the temple that was erected there and destroyed in the days of Jonathan Hyrcanos (128 B.C.E.).¹³ The fact that the city is situated near sites with sacred traditions, such as the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal and Joseph’s tomb, keeps Shechem in collective memory to this day.

Conclusions

One may conclude, then, that Shechem was a central place, especially from the early stage of the people’s history until the dividing of the United Kingdom, but not afterwards. Even the references in Psalms appear to relate to the time of the conquest of the land (Pss 60:8; 108:8). On the other hand, its place in collective biblical memory is due primarily to the city’s location between the two mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, mentioned in the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua, and holy to both congregations: those of the South, but especially for those of the North, who erected their temple on Mt. Gerizim in the second half of the 5th century B.C.E.

Similarities between Shechem and Jerusalem

Five similarities between Shechem and Jerusalem will now be detailed. (1) The two towns have a clear alien background with a named dynasty. Shechem is depicted as a Hivite city ruled by Hamor (Gen 34:2, 6, 8, 13, 18 [twice], 20, 24, 26; Judg 9:28), while Jerusalem appears in the books of Judges and Samuel as a Jebusite city, the name of whose king was Araunah in the days of David (2 Sam 24:18–25).¹⁴ Although both cities were conquered by the Israelites—Shechem by Jacob’s sons (Gen 34:25–29) and Jebusite Jerusalem by

10. See Wright, “Shechem,” 139–54. In Dever’s words, “Shechem revived and most likely continued as an administrative center in Mount Ephraim (Str, VIII–VII; ca. 810–724 BCE)” (“4. Shechem,” 220).

11. See *ibid.*, 200. Nevertheless, John Van Seters notes, “While Samaria may have been the political capital of Israel, Shechem was its traditional and religious center and remained so down to later times” (“Joshua 24 and the Problem of Tradition in the Old Testament,” in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* [ed. W. Boyd Barrick and John R. Spencer; JSOTSup 31; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984] 139–58 [p. 153]).

12. See p. 241 n. 41 below.

13. See Wright, *Shechem*, 170–84.

14. In the parallel text in 1 Chr 21:18–28, his name is Ornan. In the case of Jerusalem, an even earlier king is remembered in Genesis: King Melchizedek of Salem. According to most commentators, Salem is Jerusalem. See Ps 76:3 and my discussion

David (2 Sam 5:6–9)—none of the inhabitants of either were dispossessed. Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi slew all the males of Shechem, including Hamor, the city's king, and his son Shechem, but the other sons of Jacob took the children and the wives captive as part of the booty (Gen 34:29); they did not destroy the city. It is no wonder, then, that in the days of the Judges we meet descendants of Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, in Shechem (Judg 9:28). Similarly, in the days of David we meet the descendants of the Jebusites who were not destroyed under Joshua (Josh 15:63; Judg 1:21; 19:11–12; 2 Sam 24:18–25; 1 Chr 21:18–28).

(2) Shechem is situated on the border between Manasseh and Ephraim, while Jerusalem is located on the border between Benjamin and Judah. As a result, in various texts both cities may be associated with either of two possible tribes.¹⁵

(3) Both cities are connected with holy mountains: Shechem with Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, and Jerusalem with Mt. Zion, which is also called "Mount of the Lord's House" (see, for example, Isa 2:2–3).

(4) Both cities are absent over long periods from narratives where we would expect them to appear. On the one hand, Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Torah literature,¹⁶ but it gains prominence in the Deuteronomistic History and in the prophetic literature. Shechem, on the other hand, is present in the Torah literature but absent from Deuteronomy and appears only sporadically in the subsequent Deuteronomistic History, becoming absent again in the long period after the days of Jeroboam I.¹⁷

(5) The holy places of both cities are mentioned. Shechem housed a temple to Ba'al-berith (Judg 9:4), whom the Israelites adopted as their god (Judg 8:33–34). It was the place the grape harvest festival was celebrated (Judg 9:27).¹⁸ Jerusalem housed the altar David built on the threshing floor of Araunah to stop the plague that YHWH sent as punishment for the census (2 Samuel 24). According to the Chronicler, this was the site of the temple (2 Chr 3:1).¹⁹

about Salem hinting at Jerusalem in *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 150–58.

15. In Judg 1:21, Jerusalem appears as part of the territory of Benjamin, but in Josh 15:63, the city is in the territory of Judah. As for Shechem, see p. 233 above, with n. 9.

16. See my chapter "Is Jerusalem Also an Issue for Polemic?" *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 130–68.

17. See pp. 232–234 above.

18. I do not mention v. 46 in this context, because I am convinced that Migdal-Shechem (= the Tower of Shechem) was not part of Shechem but a nearby settlement. On Migdal-Shechem as a place name, see recently Nadav Na'aman, "A Hidden Anti-Samaritan Polemic in the Story of Abimelech and Shechem (Judges 9)," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 55 (2011) 1–20 (pp. 8–11).

19. See my "Araunah's Threshing-Floor: A Lesson in Shaping Historical Memory," in *Performing Memory in Biblical Narrative and Beyond* (ed. Athalya Brenner and

All these similarities create the impression that Jerusalem replaced Shechem in the Judean collective memory.²⁰ This situation could have created a competition between the two cities, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem (586 B.C.E.).

Shechem: An Ambiguous City

In order to prevent any kind of competition and to cancel every possible advantage Shechem might be perceived to have had, the Pentateuch includes materials that present Shechem in a negative light (Gen 34:1–35:5). But when the context might be interpreted as too positive, the name of the city simply is not mentioned (Deut 11:29–32; 27; Josh 8:30–35). As a result, the attitude toward Shechem becomes ambiguous.

This ambiguity may also be seen in examining the references to the city's sacred tree. Shechem's memory is closely linked to a sacred oak or terebinth: the oak of Moreh near Abraham's altar (Gen 12:6), which appears to be the terebinth near Shechem where Jacob buried all the foreign gods (Gen 35:4). Both appear, in turn, to be identified with the oak in the sacred precinct of YHWH at the foot of Shechem where Joshua is remembered to have written a book of divine instruction and set up a big stone to serve as witness (Josh 24:25–27). Finally, the preceding three trees seem meant to be recalled by the oak of the pillar beside which Abimelech was crowned (Judg 9:6).²¹ When the same tree is mentioned in the context of a Patriarch building an altar (Gen 12:6) or the concluding of a covenant involving the people of Israel (Josh 24:25–26), the tree's memory is positive, but when it is mentioned in the context of foreign gods (Gen 35:4) or the kingship of Abimelech, the memory is negative. Moreover, when each of the negative texts is placed after a positive text, it is impossible to counteract their negative influence on what preceded.

Thus, the ambiguous memory of Shechem is part of the "mythic" history of the city from early times.²² This ambiguity is retained throughout the Deuter-

Frank H. Polak; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009) 13–23; also published in *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 133–44.

20. Actually, Samaria, which became the capital of the Northern Kingdom, replaced Shechem (1 Kgs 16:24), but Samaria was not attributed any holiness in Judahite or Judean collective memory; see 1 Kgs 15:30–33.

21. Ahituv is convinced that, despite their different names, all these trees relate to the same tree in the temple of Shechem ("Shechem," 669). The same idea is expressed in many commentaries; see, e.g., Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 141. More recently, Na'aman has also explained that the tree in Judg 9:6 is a sacred tree in the temple of Shechem ("Hidden Anit-Samaritan Polemic," 6).

22. In my view, mythic time in ancient Israel extends from the days of the Patriarchs to those of the Judges and the establishment of the monarchy. Our knowledge about this time is supported almost exclusively by the Bible as a historical source rather than by archaeology or reliable historical analysis.

onomistic History. The reader may ask: why is the city, which appears in the covenant ceremony in Josh 24:1–28, not mentioned in the ceremony that takes place near Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim in Deut 11:29–32; 27 and Josh 8:32? Why is the city not mentioned after the division of the Kingdom? Because ambiguity often results from different trends at work, what trend operated to avoid any mention of the city or to depict it negatively?

Tendentiousness and Its Means of Expression

The Assumptions

Because Shechem was not a marginal topographical notation but rather, a capital with associated elements of the sacred, it seems reasonable to assume that some tendency lurks behind the attempt to diminish it. Here, I rely on my previously published general perception that biblical literature is ideological and that the materials it includes serve ideological needs in one way or another.²³ Put another way, the formulation of Shechem in biblical memory is motivated by social and ideological needs of this sort.

Another supposition relates to slander. The need to slander memory more generally and to slander the memory of the city of Shechem in this particular case is linked to the impossibility of ignoring the subject totally. To compensate, slander is used as a tool to deepen the antagonism.

Means Used to Detract from the Status of Shechem

I begin with the description of the covenant ceremony at Shechem in Josh 24:1–28. When examined without reference to what precedes or follows, it reveals Shechem's high status and its importance in historical memory. It appears here as an alternative to the Covenant at Horeb²⁴ and to the temple in Jerusalem. In this description, Shechem, not Shiloh, was the place where Joshua assembled the people "before God" (Josh 24:1).²⁵ There, too, after Joshua's address that recapitulates the nation's history (vv. 2–18), the ceremony of the Covenant was observed. During the course of the celebration, Joshua gave the people "laws and judgment" (vv. 19–25), inscribing them in the book of God's law, and he set up a large commemorative stone bearing witness to the event

23. Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, xi.

24. I mention Horeb and not Sinai because of the Deuteronomistic context.

25. In Codex Vaticanus of the Septuagint, Shiloh is mentioned in Josh 24:1 instead of Shechem. See also v. 25 and the critical apparatus of Alan E. Brooke and Norman McLean, where they show this variant reading appears in yet more versions (*The Old Testament in Greek according to the Text of Codex Vaticanus* [London: Cambridge University Press, 1917] 778). In Josh 18:1, 8–10; 19:51; 21:2; and 22:9, 12, Shiloh appears systematically as the place of gathering after the Israelites take possession of most of the land. The Tent of Meeting was set up there, and it is remembered as the place Joshua assigned portions to the tribes by lot before YHWH. See also 1 Samuel 1–4.

under the terebinth in the sanctuary of YHWH at Shechem (vv. 26–27). All these memories indicate Shechem's status as a holy place with its own sacred tradition that had preeminence over Jerusalem before the monarchy was established.²⁶ This is not the place to discuss the uniqueness of this story that glorifies Joshua's work and barely mentions Moses.²⁷ Suffice is to say that, while in the past, scholars considered this text to be quite early, today the more widely accepted opinion regards it as a late, even postexilic, story, encompassing ancient traditions of the sanctity of the city.²⁸ In my opinion, what is important is that the editing process did not reject the passage at any stage but decided to use it to conclude the book of Joshua. Thus, from a hexateuchal point of view, Shechem has an advantage over Jerusalem: it introduces the stories of the Patriarchs with the building of an altar in Shechem (Gen 12:6) and concludes with the covenant made there (Josh 24:1–28) by Joshua son of Nun, the Ephraimite (Num 13:8–16; Josh 24:29–30), and the burial of Joseph's bones "in the piece of ground that Jacob had bought for a hundred *kesitahs* ('pieces of unknown value') from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father" (Josh 24:32 and Gen 33:19).²⁹ If, as many scholars claim, the description of the covenant ceremony at Shechem is a postexilic text, it reflects openness and acceptance regarding the population of the North, later called the Samaritans. This direction is consistent, for instance, with the book of Chronicles but contradicted by

26. On the different assumptions regarding the rituals and the festivals held at Shechem and its connection to other cities, see Nielsen, *Shechem*.

27. In the Septuagint, Moses and Aaron do not appear in v. 5, and many scholars think this is an interpolation in the MT. See Moshe Anbar, *Josue et l'alliance de Sichem* (Josh 24:1–28) (Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie 25; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992) 23 n. 152.

28. See, for example, the view of Van Seters: "Joshua 24:1–27 was composed as an addition to the Dtr work . . . while Joshua 24 was influenced by the Dtr tradition it was in fact a later development of that tradition in the exilic age and must be viewed as post-Dtr" ("Joshua 24," 154). Anbar, who comes to the same conclusion, undertakes a detailed, linguistic examination of the unit and states that the style of the chapter is not Deuteronomistic but post-Deuteronomistic (*Josue et l'alliance de Sichem*, 59–78, 127–31). See also my review of Anbar's work ("Shechem or Sinai?" *Qathedrah* 94 [1999] 173–76 [Hebrew]); Christophe L. Nihan, "The Torah between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 187–223; and recently, Ada Taggar-Cohen, "The 'Holiness School': Creativity and Editorial Activity in the Book of Joshua: The Case of Joshua 24," to be published in the book intended to honor Avigdor Victor Hurowitz, which, to our great sorrow will now be in his memory instead. She also supports an authorship later than Deuteronomy but before the return from Exile under Ezra.

29. According to Nihan, the author of Joshua 24 sought to create a Hexateuch ("Torah between Samaria and Judah," 196).

Ezra, Nehemiah, and 2 Kgs 17:24–41.³⁰ Accepting or rejecting the Samaritans was a central issue throughout the Second Temple era, and biblical literature employs diverse methods to set aside and denigrate Shechem and, indirectly, the population it represents, thus undermining its very significant primary status inferred from Joshua 24.

The biblical editors used three means to fix Shechem in their historical memory as a town constituting an unworthy alternative to Jerusalem: (1) They avoided mentioning it, (2) they mentioned it indirectly, and (3) they depicted it negatively.

Avoidance

Throughout the centuries covered by the Deuteronomistic History, Shechem is not mentioned after the reign of Jeroboam I. If it were not for the prophecy in Hos 6:9, which mentions murder on the road to Shechem, or in Jer 41:5, which refers to Shechem, Samaria, and Shiloh, one might think that after Jeroboam I the city simply disappeared. The failure to mention the city creates the impression that its historical role came to an end. Avoidance is a powerful tool because it erases memory. However, even avoidance cannot blur the role of Shechem in the preceding periods.

Blurring

Deut 11:29–32, 27, and Josh 8:30–35 obscure reference to Shechem by implying its presence indirectly. It is not mentioned by name but is alluded to in references to nearby Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal. The inclusion of the name *Shechem* in the Samaritan version of Deut 11:30 (מֹלֵךְ שֶׁכֶם ‘in front of Shechem’)³¹ reinforces the link known from other sources and confirms that the references in the Masoretic version are intentionally indirect. Many scholars, from Dillmann to Na’aman and Nihan, agree that the texts of Deut 11:29–32, 27, and Josh 8:30–35 were inserted relatively late into their present positions.³²

30. See Yairah Amit, “The Samaritans: Biblical Positions in the Service of Modern Politics,” in *Samaritans: Past and Present* (ed. Menachem Mor and Friedrich V. Reiterer; Studia Judaica 53; Studia Samaritana 5; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 247–66 and the bibliography there; idem, “The Samaritans: Biblical Considerations in the Solution of a Political Problem,” in *Secularism and Biblical Studies* (ed. Roland Boer; London: Oakville, 2010) 192–203.

31. See *The Samaritan Pentateuch* (ed. Abraham Tal; Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 1994) 188.

32. August Dillmann, *Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1886) 288–90, 363–69, 477–79; Nadav Na’aman, “The Law of the Altar in Deuteronomy and the Cultic Site Near Shechem,” in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible. Festschrift John Van Seters* (ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Thomas C. Römer; BZAW 294; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000) 141–61; see also Nihan, “Torah between Samaria and Judah,”; and recently, Na’aman, “Hidden Anti-Samaritan Polemic,” 19.

Moreover, neither the mountains nor their immediate vicinity are indicated as “the site where YHWH your God will choose to establish His name” (Deut 12:11). The rite involving the two mountains of Gerizim and Ebal at a time before Israel came into its inheritance and the absence of language that indicates choice make it clear that the ceremony was a one-time event, detached from the description of the conquest, and that the venue was not the place where God would later choose to establish His name. Furthermore, the fact that the rite contains no blessings but only curses for those who do not observe the list of prohibitions creates a negative atmosphere and runs contrary to the nature of the ceremony, raising doubts about its function and its place in that context.

The Insertion of Negative Motifs

As we have seen, the book of Genesis includes ambivalent materials. On the one hand, the region of Shechem is presented as the place where the Patriarchs built altars, while on the other, Shechem is where Dinah, Jacob’s daughter, was raped and, afterwards, the city’s inhabitants were so harshly punished (Genesis 34). It is where, under the terebinth near Shechem (Gen 35:2–4), the foreign gods of Jacob’s house were buried. Elsewhere, I have shown that the rape story in Genesis 34, when interpreted as a hidden polemic, is an anti-Samaritan document proclaiming a total prohibition against marrying into the population of the North.³³ It seems that Genesis 34 depends on Judg 9:28,³⁴ according to which Shechem contains the clearly autochthonous element of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, and represents the likely descendants of those who were taken captive by Jacob’s sons (Gen 34:29).³⁵ Although Shechem appears as part of Israel in the description of the inheritance of Manasseh (Josh 17:1–6), where he is one of Manasseh’s sons (v. 2),³⁶ there is a need to connect it with negative deeds such as rape and intended assimilation (Genesis 34). Obviously, this anti-Shechem document, which is anti-Samaritan, is *ipso facto* late and reflects the conflicts that erupted between the Northern population and the people who returned from the Babylonian Exile.

The presence of a trend denigrating Shechem is affirmed by the designation of the place under the terebinth near Shechem as the site where the foreign

33. See my “Implicit Reduction and Latent Polemic in the Story of the Rape of Dinah,” in *In Praise of Editing in the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays in Retrospect* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012); idem, *Hidden Polemics*, 189–217.

34. According to Na’aman, this verse, which is part of the Gaal episode, belongs to the old, pre-Dtr Abimelech story and not to the late editor who manipulated elements of the old story and inserted his own additions to give the story an anti-Samaritan direction (“Hidden Anti-Samaritan Polemic,” 13). He thinks the difficulty in understanding vv. 28–29 results “from the ruse of the author who put in Gaal’s mouth the words of a drunken person” (“Hidden Anti-Samaritan Polemic,” 7).

35. See pp. 234–235 above.

36. See Shmuel Ahituv, *Joshua: A Commentary* (Mikra LeYisra’el; Tel-Aviv: Am Oved / Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995) 282 [Hebrew].

gods were buried instead of smashed or burned, as demanded by the law in Deut 12:3: “Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire, and cut down the images of their gods, obliterating their name from that site.”³⁷ Thus, the reader receives an advance hint that the foreign gods Jacob buried under the terebinth near Shechem (Gen 35:4) still exist in the temple at Shechem (Josh 24:26; see also v. 23),³⁸ which, therefore, is an unclean temple.³⁹

Y. Magen’s archeological excavations on Mt. Gerizim have revealed “the sacred precinct or compound in which the temple was located”; he continues, “there is enough evidence—historical, inscriptional and archaeological—to confirm its existence.”⁴⁰ According to Magen, this temple was built in the mid-5th century B.C.E., which is the time of Nehemiah, and not, as was commonly supposed following Josephus, in the 4th century.⁴¹ This discovery further supports the conclusion that the passage in Genesis 35 is an addition designed to deprive Shechem and its active temple of its original, primary and foundational status in the description of the covenant ceremony (Josh 24:1–28). This positive description apparently reflects the atmosphere before the return from the exile under Ezra and before the complete separation between the two congregations.⁴² The fact that, from the middle of the 5th century B.C.E., Mt. Gerizim, the temple mount of Shechem connected with blessing, became the important

37. Compare Deut 7:5, 25 and its implementation by some Judahite kings; see, for example, 1 Kgs 15:13 and 2 Kgs 23:6.

38. Gen 35:4 ends in the Septuagint with the words “and destroyed them to this day.” The first addition, “and destroyed them,” is the result of the translator’s desire to make the story congruent with the law in Deuteronomy. The second addition, “to this day,” has a rhetorical effect, conveying the impression that the place remains unclean in the time of the reader. No wonder that the Sages used this interpolation in anti-Samaritan polemic; see y. *Abod. Zar.* 5:4 and *Gen. Rab.* 81:3.

39. Nielsen suggests that “vv. 2 and 4 may be dissociated from v. 3 and, with some hesitation, from v. 1” (*Shechem*, 236–40; quoting p. 236). Zakovitch proves that Gen:2bα, 4 (“Rid yourselves, of the alien gods in your midst” and “They gave to Jacob all the alien gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the terebinth that was near Shechem”) are a secondary interpolation (“The Object of the Narrative of the Burial of Foreign Gods at Shechem,” *BM* 25 (1980) 30–37 [Hebrew]; idem, *An Introduction to Inner-Biblical Interpretation* (Even-Yehuda: Reches Educational Projects, 1992) 30–33 [Hebrew]).

40. Yitzhak Magen, “Bells, Pendants, Snakes & Stone: A Samaritan Temple to the Lord on Mt. Gerizim,” *BAR* 36/6 (2010) 26–35, 70 (p. 29). His summation is helpful: “Thus, the historical sources (especially Josephus), the architectural remains, the burnt bones, the small finds and the inscriptions all unequivocally demonstrate the existence of a Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim built in imitation of the Temple in Jerusalem” (p. 70). For a more detailed description, see idem, “The Temple of YHWH at Mt. Gerizim,” *Erlsr* 29 (2009) 277–97 [Hebrew].

41. See Magen, “Bells, Pendants,” 30.

42. See p. 238 n. 28 above.

religious center for the Northern population explains the need to slander Shechem by those who rejected it and wanted to glorify the temple mount of Jerusalem instead.

The two successive derogatory insertions (Genesis 34 and 35:2–4) are effective not only because of their content and the force of repetition⁴³ but also because of their place in the sequence and the early stage at which they were introduced. Their rhetorical force influences the negative memory of Shechem and leads any reader aware of these slanderous texts to doubt any positive representation of that city thereafter.

Conclusion

Use of the foregoing means assured that Shechem would have no honorable place in Judean historical memory. Genesis 34–35 prepares the background of sexual transgression and idolatry that will adhere to any subsequent material connected with Shechem and its vicinity. Deut 11:29–32, 27 and Joshua 8 were inserted to proclaim that Shechem and its mountains were not the place God chose to establish His name. Hence, they are not to be regarded as an alternative to Jerusalem, and Joshua 24 cannot threaten the sacred status of Jerusalem.

It thus transpires that, despite the importance and centrality of the city of Shechem, it appears in a thoroughly negative light in biblical memory. It is reasonable to suppose that the conflict between the returned exiles and the inhabitants of the North produced the different voices emanating from the texts. Some of returnees regarded Shechem and the Northern population favorably and had marriage ties with them (Neh 13:28–29), especially before Ezra and Nehemiah restored Jerusalem. Others were interested in separation and remaining aloof; they would not have regarded the people of the North as worthy associates in the temple of Jerusalem. That group would have made every effort to denigrate Shechem and its surroundings, declaring that this was not the place that God had chosen to establish His name. Both groups created

43. The sages connect the two events by explaining that the foreign gods buried in Shechem were part of the booty taken from the city according to Gen 34:28–29. See *Tg. Ps.-J.* 35: 2, 4:

(2) Jacob said to the members of his house and to all who (were) with him, “Take away the idols of the nations that are among you, which you took from the house of idols of Shechem, and purify yourselves from the defilement of the slain whom you have touched, and change your clothes. . . . (4) They delivered into the hand of Jacob all the idols of the nations that were in their hands, that they had taken from the house of idols of Shechem, and the rings that were on the ears of the inhabitants of the city of Shechem, on which the likeness of his idol was designed; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth that was near the city of Shechem. (Michael Maher, trans., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis. Translated, with Introduction and Notes* [Aramaic Bible 1B; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992] 119).

the complex literary reality in the texts of the Hebrew Bible and the effect it has had on historical memory. In Israelite memory, Shechem is not an alternative to Jerusalem, while in Samaritan memory, Mt. Gerizim, the mountain of Isaac's binding and the mountain of blessing, is precisely that. No wonder, then, that the Sages decreed: "When will they be accepted? When they reject Mt. Gerizim and accept Jerusalem" (*Kutim* 2:8).

Mizpah and the Possibilities of Forgetting

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The ancient site of Mizpah (Tell en-Naşbeh) was located approximately 12 kilometers north of Jerusalem along the principal north–south corridor that cut through the central highlands. Situated on a low plateau alongside this important transit route, the flow of traffic that moved between Jerusalem and the more northern sites of Bethel, Shiloh, or Shechem, for example, would have advanced by way of the road Mizpah oversaw and would have done so whether an individual was traveling on this thoroughfare in the early Iron Age or six centuries later, in the early Persian period. Mizpah’s influence in the highland region thus derived from geography and good fortune, and as those significant locations around it were abandoned or destroyed during the volatile centuries that marked this era, Mizpah stands out in the historical record for its capacity to endure.

Though Mizpah was a continuously inhabited settlement throughout this long period of time, the location’s most important historical moment occurred relatively late in its history when the site was singled out and established by the Neo-Babylonian Empire as a new, provincial administrative center in the wake of Jerusalem’s destruction in 586 B.C.E. Having been reconfigured as an imposing fortress on Judah’s northern border in the 9th century B.C.E.¹ the city’s strategic location and impressive fortifications made it an attractive site to serve as a new center for political and commercial affairs under the Babylonians, and all indications suggest that Mizpah remained the *de facto* capital of

1. For a description of the impressive fortification system erected at the site during the 9th century B.C.E., including the construction of a number of towers, a moat, and a massive city wall three and half to four meters in width, see Chester McCown, *Tell en-Naşbeh Excavated under the Direction of the Late William Frederic Badé*, vol. 1: *Archaeological and Historical Results* (Berkeley, CA: Pacific Institute of the Pacific School of Religion, 1947) 190–99; Thomas L. McClellan, “Town Planning at Tell en-Naşbeh,” *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 100 (1984) 54–57; Jeffrey Zorn, *Tell en-Naşbeh: A Re-Evaluation of the Architecture and Stratigraphy of the Early Bronze Age, Iron Age and Later Periods* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993) 151, 312–40; Israel Finkelstein, “The Great Wall of Tell en-Naşbeh (Mizpah), the First Fortifications in Judah, and 1 Kings 15:16–22*,” *VT* 62 (2012) 15–17.

the highland region for at least a century after Jerusalem's fall.² For Judahites who experienced Babylon's invasion into the southern Levant at the turn of the 6th century B.C.E. and the destruction it wrought, Mizpah's newly found status and sheer survival in the period afterward would have left an indelible impression on the memories of those who witnessed these events. But when the historian turns to texts written by the generations affected by these events, literary references to the century of Mizpah's rule are nearly entirely absent.

In a volume devoted to the city as a site of memory in the Hebrew Bible, the place of Mizpah finds particular importance because it offers insights into how the work of remembering connected to the writing and reading of these ancient texts also included, in certain instances, the work of forgetting. For, although Mizpah is described within the biblical corpus as a prominent center of tribal assembly (Judg 20:1, 21:1; 1 Sam 7:5–6) and royal coronation (1 Sam 10:17–27) during Israel's early history, Mizpah disappears almost completely from the textual record during that later period in which it became the most important city in the highland region.³ My intent in what follows will thus be to reflect on this disconnect between Mizpah's history and the representation of its past in the biblical narrative and to illustrate how this "lost" century of Mizpah's political ascendancy provides a concrete and compelling example of an ancient literary culture's attempt to negotiate their community's past by expunging certain memories from their writings.⁴

Place, Memory, and Mizpah's Ancient Past

An awareness of the significant epistemological differences separating the narrative accounts of the Hebrew Bible from modern historiography has led an increasing number of historians to turn to the concept of memory for a more nuanced understanding of that past represented within these ancient

2. The precise date when Jerusalem became the administrative capital of Yehud is unclear, but recent studies by both Edelman and Lipschits come to the reasonable conclusion that Mizpah remained capital of the region until at least the mid-5th century B.C.E. (Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005) 222–23, 332–51; Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 372.

3. A few texts do cite events that transpire within Mizpah in the period immediately following Jerusalem's destruction (e.g., 2 Kgs 25:22–26; Jeremiah 40–41). These texts and their importance will be taken up below.

4. By "literary culture," I mean something more than a limited scribal circle but intend rather a wider cultural sensibility toward the use and value of literary texts among those who wrote, read, heard, and supported the writing of these documents at a particular period in time. On the use of this term, see especially Sheldon Pollock, introduction to *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia* (ed. Sheldon Pollack; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003) 1–38.

texts.⁵ From a historical perspective, the advantage of identifying these biblical writings with cultural modes of remembering is that doing so retains the abiding connection of these texts to a more distant past, but in such a way that distinguishes their referential claims from those produced through modern historical research. Connecting that past portrayed in these narratives to expressions of cultural memory (over against notions of legend, saga, history writing, and so on) recognizes, then, that in an era before written records were numerous and literacy widespread, stories written about Israel and Judah's past were both informed by local memories that arose within the southern Levant and used as vehicles to preserve these communal recollections.⁶

An interest in the relationship between memory and history finds particular relevance for my investigation here, however, because of the influence of place on the formation of a culture's memories. The profound relationship between place and memory, as M. Halbwachs observed, is in some sense attributable to the permanence of locations and the manner in which the material vestiges of their landscapes, pathways, structures, and ruins envelope and call to mind multiple pasts that, otherwise, have mostly disappeared. For Halbwachs, this connection between place and memory became especially evident in his study

5. The bibliography on this turn to memory is already too vast to cite here, but for the genealogy of this development within the discipline of history more broadly, see especially Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (2000) 127–50; and Alon Confino, "Memory and the History of Mentalities," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008) 77–84. On the distinction between modern history and the discourse of memory in the Hebrew Bible, the remarkable lectures by Yosef Yerushalmi mark a watershed (*Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* [New York: Schocken, 1989]); as well as the important remarks on cultural memory and ancient Israel in Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (trans. Rodney Livingstone; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006) 1–80. For a recent overview of this development among historians of the southern Levant, see, for example, Ron Hendel, "Culture, Memory, History: Reflections on Method in Biblical Studies," in *Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future: The New Pragmatism* (ed. Thomas Levy; London: Equinox, 2010) 250–61.

6. The relationship between writing and memory is referred to often in the literature of antiquity and is perhaps best captured in the etymological myths of the Sumerian epic *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* and Plato's *Phaedrus*. Both works trace the invention of writing in their cultures to the problem of memory. Alongside numerous references in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., "Then YHWH said to Moses, 'Write this as a reminder in a book and recite it,'" Exod 17:14), Herodotus also evokes the desire to remember as the catalyst behind his work in his famous opening remarks. See Hermann Vanstiphout, *Epics of the Sumerian Kings: The Matter of Aratta* (ed. Jerrold Cooper; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 57–96; Plato, *Eutypbro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus* (LCL 36; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); *Phaedrus* 274e–278a; Herodotus, *The Histories* (books 1–2; LCL 117; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921) 1.1.

of pilgrimage sites scattered throughout the Levant, where the tangible reality and appearance of certain sites functioned as a crucial *aide-mémoire* for the construction of shared memories among diverse pilgrim groups.⁷ “Every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework [*cadre spatial*],” Halbwachs remarks in his seminal study on the topic; thus, “we are able to recover the past only if it is preserved, in effect, by the material environment that surrounds us.”⁸

What was particularly novel about Halbwachs’s understanding of place and memory, in this view, was his accent on the physical setting necessary for individual and collective memories to develop and, thus, on the contention that a community’s shared recollections crystallized and lived on in part through the material spaces and remains enclosed within venerable locations. Most significant about this perspective for the present investigation is that archaeological research continues to validate Halbwachs’s central insights, with remains recovered in disparate contexts such as Late Bronze Age Mycenae or early first millennium B.C.E. Nubia, for example, each offering fascinating evidence as to how older ruins and cultural objects located at important places in antiquity were used for the explicit purpose of commemorating certain pasts within these ancient regions.⁹

Two implications for the present investigation emerge from these considerations. First, the strong bond between place and memory in antiquity suggests that stories told about the past in the ancient world were often contingent on the physical appearance and material remains of those prominent places frequently encountered. In a time before photographs could be reviewed or vast archives researched, the past retraced within ancient texts would have been dependent in some sense on cultural memories that arose from the places that elicited them within a community: the tomb of an ancestor (Gen 35:20), the altar constructed by a remote highland leader (Judg 6:24), the monument erected by an ill-fated usurper to the throne (2 Sam 18:18). Second, the crucial role of places within the formation of cultural memories suggests that those stories informed

7. For the conclusion to this study, see Maurice Halbwachs, “The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land,” in *On Collective Memory* (ed. Lewis Coser; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 193–236.

8. Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire Collective* (2nd ed.; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968) 146. This point is also made with particular force in Casey’s chapter on “place memory” in Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) 181–215.

9. For an overview of these examples and others in which ancient societies used places for the express purpose of commemorating (or erasing) a certain past, see the collection of essays in Ruth van Dyke and Susan Alcock, eds., *Archaeologies of Memory* (Malden: Blackwell, 2003); and Norman Yoffee, ed., *Negotiating the Past in the Past: Identity, Memory, and Landscape in Archaeological Research* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007).

by these cultural forces would draw attention to certain locations, or sites of memory, within their tales. The numerous references to the landscape passed through in the wilderness itinerary (Exodus 16; 32; Numbers 13–14; 20), for example, or the description of Solomon’s lavish Jerusalem (1 Kings 7; 10) speak to this tendency and to an awareness among these writers of how past and present could converge within a place’s material features: “When your children ask in a time to come, ‘What do these stones mean for you?’ You shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. . . . Thus these stones will be a ‘memorial’ (*zikkārôn*) for Israel forever” (Josh 4:6–7). What is significant about these references to place and memory for my purposes here is not the historical authenticity of the events these texts relate. Rather, what matters is the connection made within these writings between the physical, perceivable milieu of certain places and the memories recalled about them.

My intent in highlighting the intimate relationship between place and memory is to set in bold relief the peculiar silence surrounding Mizpah’s time as capital within the biblical narrative. Of the places from the past that the historian would expect to be imprinted on the cultural memories embedded in these writings, Mizpah stands foremost among them for its capacity to survive the events that ended the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and remain a center of highland life in the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods. Mizpah, in short, was a memorable place, and the fact that its century as provincial capital was remembered so poorly within the biblical narrative suggests that something more was at work in the omission of this period in Mizpah’s history than simple oversight or ignorance regarding what once transpired there. Impressions of a suppressed past within these writings brings to the fore the question of what should have been remembered about Mizpah within this literature.

Mizpah in the Century after the Fall (Early 6th–Early 5th Century B.C.E.)

A reconstruction of Mizpah’s history during its time as provincial capital is limited, as with many other highland sites from the southern Levant, by both archaeological and textual factors.¹⁰ Nevertheless, important features of

10. From a textual perspective, an understanding of this time is impeded by the poor quality of the Babylonian Chronicle at precisely that point in the text that might speak to events in this era. For a transliteration and translation of this portion of the Chronicle, see Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (ed. Benjamin Foster; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004) 226–30. For a succinct discussion of the difficulties surrounding the interpretation of Mizpah’s remains in the 6th century B.C.E., particularly in terms of the excavation techniques operative when it was first excavated (five seasons in 1926–35), see Jeffrey Zorn, “Tell en-Naşbeh and the Problem of the Material Culture of the Sixth Century,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the*

Mizpah's history in the 6th century B.C.E. can be adduced. Perhaps most striking is the archaeological evidence that suggests Mizpah was temporarily evacuated at the end of its Stratum 3 phase (late 7th / early 6th century B.C.E.) so that the site could be renovated on a different scale and for different purposes after this time. Zorn's careful reinterpretation of the material remains from the settlement notes, in particular, the absence of *in situ* artifacts recovered from the latest phases of Stratum 3 structures that, architecturally, are otherwise quite well preserved.¹¹ When coupled with the absence of ash or traces of violent destruction from these Stratum 3 homes, this evidence indicates that Mizpah was purposefully emptied at this period in an effort to disassemble older structures and prepare the site for new buildings. Though a number of the new structures erected in Stratum 2 continued the use of local forms (that is, three- and four-room pillared buildings), the casemate-like walls located at the periphery of the site were leveled off and built over with new edifices at this time. In addition, both the important ring-road and inner-gate complex of previous settlements fell out of use in Stratum 2 due to the existence of new buildings situated near or above them.¹²

When turning to the remains of this redesigned city of the 6th century B.C.E., older fortifications and densely populated areas connected to the Iron II settlement appear to have given way to a less-crowded center marked by large public buildings and spacious private dwellings. Characteristic of the city's new homes are a greater preponderance of fine stone floors, the incorporation of costly, monolithic pillars and walls that are often considerably wider than previous enclosures.¹³ Near the northern summit of the settlement, an impressive, partially excavated building (Building 74.01) likely bears the remains of a palace constructed during this era, with its paved open courtyard and overall layout reflecting Mesopotamian palatial forms.¹⁴ The total area of the new structures erected in Mizpah at this time are also reflective of their finer craftsmanship, with even the smallest of Stratum 2 buildings being, on average, nearly twice the median size of homes in the former, more crowded Stratum 3 settlement.¹⁵ That the structures uncovered in Stratum 2 were oriented toward an entirely different town plan from its Stratum 3 predecessor offers further evidence of the disjunction between the two settlements and of the different func-

Neo-Babylonian Period (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 413–17.

11. Zorn, "Naṣbeh and Material Culture," 418–19.

12. *Ibid.*, 427; Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 237–39.

13. "It is clear," Zorn notes, "that buildings in Stratum 2 were universally larger, less crowded, and of better construction than those of Stratum 3" ("Naṣbeh and Material Culture," 429).

14. *Idem*, "Tell en-Naṣbeh," 173–74, 178, 182. Lipschits raises the possibility that another, even larger palace may have been located in southern portion of the site ("The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule," *TA* 26 [1999] 168).

15. Zorn, "Naṣbeh and Material Culture," 429.

tion Mizpah assumed during this era. In place of a densely populated bulwark on Judah's northern border, the large homes, palace, and storehouses present in Stratum 2 suggest that Mizpah had now become an administrative center.¹⁶

Also indicative of this new city are the smaller remains that reflect a change in the site's status and inhabitants. Fragments from three Mesopotamian-style coffins recovered from within Mizpah's walls are noteworthy for both their distinct cultural ties to Babylonian material culture and the fact that Israelite and Judahite law expressly prohibited the burying of individuals within the intramural spaces of towns. In addition, the recovery of a bronze circlet with a cuneiform inscription and an ostrakon bearing a Mesopotamian name ([*be*]n *mar-šarri-ušur*) written in Hebrew characters are further suggestive of the presence of foreigners from Mesopotamia living within Mizpah's confines.¹⁷ Though none of these remains can be linked securely with a particular stratum at Mizpah due to the excavation techniques used at the site, the Neo-Babylonian period remains the only conceivable era in Mizpah's history when the location would have housed Mesopotamian garrisons and officials.¹⁸

The changes that took place within Mizpah during the 6th century B.C.E. are also mirrored by the situation around it in the Benjaminite hill country. While much of the Judahite realm was devastated by Babylonian forces as they swept west toward Egypt, a small area north of Jerusalem appears to have been purposefully spared, leaving Mizpah at the center of a limited, agriculturally significant region that was permitted to persist under Babylonian control.¹⁹ Thus, while demographic studies reveal a sharp decline in population throughout the former Judahite kingdom during the 6th century B.C.E., Mizpah and the area around it evinced little drop in population and likely even grew modestly during this period.²⁰ The distribution of storage handles stamped with *mšh* or *mwšh* attest to this region's stability during the collapse of Judah, with most

16. Ibid., 419; and idem, "Tell en-Naşbeh," 167–83.

17. For discussion and images of these finds, see idem, "Naşbeh and Material Culture," 433–36.

18. Just how closely the Babylonians controlled a region such as Judah, as David Vanderhooft rightly notes, is difficult to determine, and there is little evidence to suggest they did so in the vigorous manner of Assyria before them. From a Babylonian perspective, Mizpah's function was most likely that of a modest, central site to gather and store tributary requirements from a region that was left undeveloped, perhaps purposely so, in an effort to create a buffer zone between Babylon and Egypt. For this reason, it is most likely that Mizpah housed only a small Babylonian bureaucracy or military force ("Babylonian Strategies of Imperial Control in the West: Royal Practice and Rhetoric," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* [ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003] 235–62).

19. That Ramat Raḥel was not destroyed during this period leaves open the possibility that it too continued to be used by the Babylonians. See Oded Lipschits et al., "Palace and Village, Paradise and Oblivion: Unraveling the Riddles of Ramat Raḥel," *NEA* 74 (2011) 34–35.

20. Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 246–48.

of these handles stemming from areas in Benjamin not destroyed by war and from a period that corresponds roughly to the Neo-Babylonian era. That 70% of the handles recovered were unearthed at Mizpah provides further evidence that this site had become a hub of commercial activity after Jerusalem was destroyed.²¹

In sum, the archaeological evidence from Mizpah indicates that, shortly before or during the siege of Jerusalem in 587/86 B.C.E., the location was substantially transformed in an effort to establish a new administrative center in the highlands. Once an important Judahite fortress on the kingdom's northern limit, Mizpah came to be reconfigured at the time of Jerusalem's destruction with new, elegant homes, a palace, and large storehouses likely serving the bureaucracy now stationed there. The continued use of three and four-room domiciles at the site indicates that a local Judahite population still resided within the city,²² but the traces of Mesopotamian artifacts and architecture suggests that at least some of the inhabitants of this new capital did not originate from the former Judahite realm. When, precisely, the Persians took control of the site cannot be adduced from the archaeological record, but there is no evidence to suggest Mizpah's status changed under the auspices of this new empire until Jerusalem was rebuilt in the mid-5th century B.C.E.

Outside Mizpah's environs the agricultural areas of western and central Benjamin were mostly unaffected by events that consumed the rest of Judah. As a result, the region that stretched from Bethel to the north and Gibeon and Gibeah to Mizpah's south continued on with agrarian life after the Babylonian invasion in much the same way as it had before foreign armies marched into the hill country. The region may have even benefited economically from this turn of events. Demographic figures may suggest that some of those who survived the Babylonian invasion relocated to this region of Benjamin, with the decades of Mizpah's time as provincial capital during the 6th century B.C.E. likely being a period of relative tranquility, stability, and recovery for those Judeans who still lived in the region. Thus, through forces not of Mizpah's own making, this was its century, and of all the places that had once populated the kingdoms of Israel and Judah during the Iron Age, Mizpah was one of the few locations that could claim unbroken continuity with this past in terms of identity and culture.

On the Possibilities of Forgetting

The advantage of bringing archaeological evidence to bear on an investigation devoted to the workings of an ancient literary culture is that doing so reveals a past not remembered within writings composed and read by these

21. Jeffrey Zorn et al., "The *M(W)SH* Stamp Impression and the Neo-Babylonian Period," *IEJ* 44 (1994) 161–83; Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 149–52.

22. Zorn, "Tell en-Naşbeh," 183–84.

individuals. References to Mizpah's status in the 6th century B.C.E. are not, however, entirely absent within the biblical corpus. A number of texts from both the books of Kings and Jeremiah speak, in particular, to the unrest that unfolded at Mizpah in that period just after Jerusalem's fall. The detailed description of Gedaliah's installation as a local leader of the region by the Babylonians and his subsequent assassination by a certain Ishmael of the House of David (2 Kgs 25:22–26; Jer 40:5, 41:1–2) speak to the political change and turmoil induced by the invasion of Judah in 587/86 and the continued resistance toward Babylonian rule in the period subsequent to Jerusalem's destruction. In addition, allusions to the "king's daughters" abiding at Mizpah (Jer 41:10) and Jeremiah's initial decision to live there (Jer 40:6) further intimate Mizpah's importance during this difficult historical period and the possibility that some of those elites not deported to Babylon found refuge within its confines during this time.²³

The historical importance of these texts is unquestionable. Nevertheless, the significance of references such as these is limited by their restriction to events that transpired in the very first years, and perhaps only months, after Jerusalem's fall.²⁴ Thus, following the story of Gedaliah's murder nothing more is written of Mizpah, though the site continued to function as the provincial center of the region for at least a century. Names of possible Judahite leaders presiding at the site, correspondences between Mizpah and those exiled in Babylon or Egypt, details surrounding the transition from Babylonian to Persian rule in the highlands, or references to Mizpah's role in the rebuilding of Jerusalem are never discussed or alluded to within the biblical corpus. Remarkably, no mention is made of Mizpah in the entire book of Ezra despite the fact that the location was the most important city in Yehud when exilic groups began returning to the region. Stranger still, not one family or individual from Mizpah is referred to among those who returned to the province in the long list compiled in Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7, even though the other Benjaminite settlements surrounding Mizpah are carefully cited within this register (Gibeon, Anathoth, Ramah, Geba, Michmash, Bethel, 'Ai). The only reference to Mizpah found within Ezra–Nehemiah stems, rather, from Nehemiah 3, where it is related that certain individuals from Mizpah were involved in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls (Neh 3:7, 15, 19). And, though some of these men are

23. For a detailed reconstruction of these events, see again Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 84–102.

24. The biblical text does not provide a clear chronology of these events, and scholars remain divided on the question of whether Gedaliah's assassination happened in the months just after Jerusalem's destruction or possibly a few years later, such as in the third deportation of Judahites alluded to in Jer 52:30 (ca. 582 B.C.E.). For my purposes here, what is important is that both chronologies restrict these events to the very beginning of Mizpah's time as capital.

described as leaders of the ‘district of Mizpah’ (*šar pelek hammišpâ*, Neh 3:15) or Mizpah itself (*šar hammišpâ*, Neh 3:19), what authority Mizpah exercised in the region, or its political relationship to Jerusalem, is never acknowledged or explained.

The cursory references to Mizpah in the book of Nehemiah and the complete silence in Ezra concerning it exhibit a reticence toward the location that conforms to the rest of the biblical narrative, including those later writings, such as Daniel or Esther, whose stories are set in a time when Mizpah was administrative capital of the highlands. Mizpah’s absence from the textual record during this period could, perhaps, be explained by contending that scribal activity ceased when certain elites were deported from the region and Jerusalem was destroyed, and began again only a century later when Jerusalem slowly began to recover. The precise opposite turn of events, however, appears to have been the case. In addition to the book of Lamentations, most of Ezekiel and Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40–55), large portions of Jeremiah (e.g., 25; 29; 39–44; 50–51), a considerable number of Psalms (e.g., 74; 89; 137), and the final chapters of the books of Kings are all decidedly exilic in theme and orientation. Furthermore, many writings that existed before Jerusalem’s destruction in the southern Levant were reshaped, augmented, and rewritten in the wake of the temple’s dismantling and the dissolution of the Davidic dynasty, including many traditions now included in the narratives that extend from Genesis to 2 Kings.²⁵ Thus, rather than witnessing an interruption of scribal activity, the 6th century B.C.E. was, in fact, a significant era of literary output in which bold new ideas and perspectives were forged among the literary cultures active during this time. But in none of these writings do we read of Mizpah’s century of rule.

From a historical perspective, the absence of Mizpah within these writings appears intentional. Alternative explanations for its absence—political or cultural insignificance, ignorance of its existence or import, scribal inactivity—all prove unsustainable in light of the archaeological and textual evidence available and cannot overcome a sense of the deliberateness with which Mizpah’s time as capital was excluded from the extant works of this period by those who composed and read them. In holding up the archaeological remains from Mizpah alongside its representation within the Hebrew Bible, the historian is thus able to illuminate a pointed and historically meaningful instance of what could be termed a willful, or purposeful, forgetting among the Hebrew scribes responsible for the transmission and production of texts in the era after Jerusalem’s destruction.

25. For a discussion of those texts written or redacted during the Babylonian era, see especially Reinhard Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (trans. John Bowden; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 316–22; David Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 204–51; and Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (trans. Linda Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012) 117–56.

Others have rightly noted how this absence participates in a wider biblical silence toward the events that occurred in the former Judahite realm during the Exilic Period and how Jerusalem's destruction cast a shadow on the era that elapsed between its downfall and its slow rebirth in the Persian era.²⁶ Significant about Mizpah within this discussion, however, is that the lack of references to its history in the 6th century B.C.E. coincides with the preservation of prominent allusions to its more distant past within this same body of literature.²⁷ Thus, unlike the Egyptian capital of Akhetaten, for example, which was blotted out from later memory through the destruction of all written references to it,²⁸ particular descriptions of Mizpah's past were carefully maintained by those same literary circles that also excluded Mizpah's more current history within their writings. A startling tension thus surfaces within the biblical portrayal of Mizpah's past between what was remembered about it in these writings and what we now know through the archaeological remains of the site was allowed to fall out of memory.

The discord that surrounds the representation of Mizpah's past in the biblical corpus, I would contend, conforms to a type of selective or instrumentalized memory among those scribes deeply concerned with the story of Jerusalem's past and present.²⁹ My reason for adopting the notion of instrumentality here

26. So, more recently, Bob Becking, "'We All Returned As One!': Critical Notes on the Myth of the Mass Return," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 3–18; Sara Japhet, "Exile and Restoration in the Book of Chronicles," *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 331–41; Hans Barstad, "The Myth of the Empty Land," in *The Historian and The Hebrew Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 90–134; John Kessler, "Images of Exile: Representations of the 'Exile' and 'Empty Land' in Sixth to Fourth Century BCE Yehudite Literature," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Context* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 309–51; Carr, *Formation of Hebrew Bible*, 225–29.

27. So again the references in Judg 20:1; 21:1; 1 Sam 7:5–6; 10:17–27; and 1 Kgs 15:22 // 2 Chr 16:6.

28. On the suppression of the memory of Akhenaten's reign in Egypt and his capital of Akhetaten, see especially Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1997) 23–29. The act of erasing inscriptions (*damnatio memoriae*) and the threats levied against those who dared to do so are widespread in antiquity, however, and attest to an awareness in the ancient world of the powerful link between writing and memory. For a fascinating description of the systematic erasure of royal Mesopotamian inscriptions on monuments brought to Susa by Elamite kings, for example, see Zainab Bahrani, *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) 152–65.

29. I adopt this notion of instrumentality from Paul Ricoeur's discussion of the uses and abuses of memory and, more specifically, of the form of deficient memory not traceable to pathological causes but to "a concerted manipulation of memory and

resides, in part, in an attempt to reflect the deliberateness with which Mizpah's past was recast within texts composed during and after it had replaced Jerusalem as capital. In this way, I wish to draw attention to how certain memories of the period after Jerusalem's fall could be erased by those literary circles who had the opportunity and means to expunge them from their writings.³⁰ The notion of instrumentality is also important, however, because it allows for the recognition that Mizpah's past was not completely removed from these texts but was reframed in such a way that the location could find importance within a more distant past that did not conflict with Jerusalem's. What is particularly striking about the place of Mizpah, then, is that it occupied a space somewhere between the desire to remember and the desire to forget among the literary cultures writing after Babylon's invasion.

"To heal up wounds, to replace what has been lost, to reform broken molds," Nietzsche writes in his *Untimely Meditations*, requires "an individual, a people, a culture" to "know the right time to forget just as well as the right time to remember."³¹ For those who survived the destruction of Jerusalem and the collapse of the Judahite kingdom in the 6th century B.C.E., the work of remembering involved in the writing and reading of texts during this time, I have argued, also included, in the case of Mizpah, a sustained effort to forget. The strong bond between place and memory and the persistence of Mizpah's physical remains as one journeyed northward from Jerusalem would have made this a particularly difficult forgetting, and it is for this reason, perhaps, that certain images of Mizpah's importance in a more ancient past were preserved and lifted up within the biblical narrative. The textual silence surrounding Mizpah's century of rule after Jerusalem's fall, however, suggests that particular memories of this time were a burden too difficult to bear for those behind the formation of the biblical narrative and that the exigencies of remembering a certain past through these writings were inextricably bound to the possibilities of forgetting others.

of forgetting by those who hold power" (*Memory, History, Forgetting* [trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004] 80–86).

30. "It is, more precisely, the selective function of the narrative," Ricoeur remarks, "that opens to manipulation the opportunity and the means of a clever strategy, consisting from the outset in a strategy of forgetting as much as in a strategy of remembering" (*Memory, History, Forgetting*, 85).

31. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben," in *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1938) 104–5.

Dislocating Jerusalem's Memory with Tyre

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Because it is beyond the territory of the modern State of Israel, Tyre did not make it into *The Fifty Major Cities of the Bible*.¹ But with a total of 61 mentions, readers of the Bible encounter Tyre nearly as often as Damascus or Shechem, as often as Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod put together, or as Ekron and Gath together.

Set beyond the biblical heartland, the Tyre that populated the Yehudite mindscape originated more from indirect reports than from experience of the actual city, as would have been the case with nearer cities. Less tied to experience of the actual place, the Bible uses Tyre as a nonmaterial *lieu de mémoire* that is crucial to the way Yehudites were to experience Jerusalem. Tyre's fabulous wealth is associated with ultimate *hubris*. Paradoxically, Tyre is also portrayed as a benevolent God-fearer. In short, the figuration of Tyre as a site of memory involved two separate approaches: contrasting it with Sidon and associating it with Jerusalem.

Tyre, Not Sidon

In Genesis and Chronicles, Sidon is a son of Canaan, but Tyre has no genealogy (Gen 10:15; 1 Chr 1:13).² Judges 1:31 lists Sidon among the Canaanites Asher failed to conquer, while Tyre is absent from the list.³ Joshua 19 marks the northwest corner of the territory of Asher at Tyre. Hence, it makes sense that Hiram of Tyre hears about David's fame. He spontaneously sends materials and artisans who build a house for David (2 Sam 5:11). At a later time, David's realm is envisioned as covering the entire southern Levant, reaching as far north as Dan and Sidon (2 Sam 24:6). This agrees with Josh 13:5, which

1. John C. H. Laughlin, *The Fifty Major Cities of the Bible* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

2. See Ehud Ben Zvi, "Exploring Jerusalem as a Site of Memory in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Period," pp. 197–217 in this volume.

3. Sidonian and Canaanite territories are listed together in Josh 13:4–6. Sidonian and Canaanite rulers are listed together in Judg 3:3. Sidonian and Amalekite oppressors are listed together in Judg 10:12.

encompasses Tyre within the Israelite territorial remains to be possessed, a territory reaching as far north as Byblos.

Because Tyre is not a son of Canaan, the various lists of *ba'alim* include the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines, but the gods of Tyre are nowhere mentioned. When, in his letter to Solomon, Hiram recognizes YHWH as the God of Israel who loves his people, the Chronicler implies that YHWH is the God of Tyre or at least the God of her king (2 Chr 2:10–11).⁴ Clearly, the god of Tyre is not equated with Ba'al. Hence, the Tyrian materials with which the temple of Jerusalem is supposedly built are *kosher*. Along with the Tyrians, the Sidonians contribute great quantities of logs to David (2 Chr 22:1), but the Chronicler is careful to have the actual materials used for the temple sent by Hiram the Tyrian only, because Sidon is not *kosher*. Ezra 3:7 mentions Sidonians who received funds to build the “second” temple along with Tyrians, but the project was not successful. Therefore, it appears the literati of Yehud invented the concept of traceability in the supply chain of logs and building materials for the temple.

The story of Elijah displays a similar differentiation between Sidon and Tyre. Jezebel, the Sidonian princess, embodies evil. Solomon's many foreign wives include Sidonian but no Tyrian princesses, because it is as worshipers of foreign gods that they drew Solomon into idolatry. Solomon followed Astarte, the goddess of the Sidonians, but no Tyrian divinity. Logically, there are no Tyrian altars among those Josiah destroyed (2 Kgs 23:13). Although 1 Kgs 17:9 states that Zarephath “belongs to Sidon,” it is at Zarephath that Elijah finds himself out of reach of Jezebel the Sidonian. It is as though an invisible line isolated Zarephath from Sidon, making Zarephath's proximity with Tyre a safe haven. In the mental map of Yehud, Tyre is within and Sidon is out. Sidon is a negative cipher, and the image of Tyre is far more ambiguous.

Tyre Rather Than Samaria

Boundaries are not natural features but rather social products.⁵ Underlining the boundary between Tyre and Sidon served to reduce the distance between Tyre and Jerusalem and to bracket Samaritan Israel. Benjamin and the Israelite highland fade into a mere suburb of Jerusalem. The Chronicler's references to Tyre's active participation in the building of the temple resonates with the book's final words, in which Cyrus calls everyone among the people of YHWH to go up to Jerusalem to build a house for YHWH there (2 Chr 36:23). When the Chronicler has Hiram/Hiram clearly state that YHWH is Israel's God and

4. See Ehud Ben Zvi, “When a Foreign Monarch Speaks,” in *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; BibleWorld; London: Equinox, 2006) 270–88.

5. Michele Lamont and Virag Molnar, “The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002) 167–97.

that Israel is YHWH's people, the absence of Israelites next to Judeans and Benjaminites who were stirred to return home to build the house of the Lord in Ezra 1:5 combines with the mention of expected Phoenician involvement in the building of Jerusalem's second temple in Ezra 3:7 to shame Israel.⁶ Tyre is more Israelite than Samaritan Israel. The temple is more Israelite than Israel.⁷

The position of Tyre and Sidon in the Yehudite mental map is matched by a web of connections between Tyre and Jerusalem. Like Jerusalem, Tyre is not mentioned in the Torah. Jerusalem and Tyre take center stage in 1 Kings, where Hiram of Tyre sends servants to Solomon "because Hiram had been loving David all the days" (1 Kgs 5:15[1]). In reply to Hiram's embassy, Solomon asks for logs and offers to send workers to help Hiram's loggers. Wealth differentiates the portrayal of Solomon and David; Solomon offers to pay wages to Hiram's workers. While he had built David's palace for free, Hiram now is paid annually by Solomon (1 Kgs 5:23–25[9–11]). The Tyrian king sends the wood by sea to a coastal place indicated by Solomon, from which they are hauled up to Jerusalem. Whereas Hiram acted as a patron toward David, the books of Kings insist that between Hiram and Solomon love evolved into an equal partnership. It is essential to mark the difference between father and son, because the building materials they received from Tyre were used for different buildings.

Tyrian Riches Scorned or Laundered

The Chronicler mentions Hiram's supply of materials and artisans to build David's house (1 Chr 14:1). The Chronicler even adds that David received great quantities of logs from the *Sidonians* and Tyrians in preparation for the building of the house of God (1 Chr 22:4). These logs vanish into thin air so that Solomon can write to Hiram, king of Tyre, to order new logs when he sets down to build the temple (2 Chr 2:13–14). Compared to Kings, the Chronicler underlines the change of generations by using a different name; Hiram becomes Hiram's son. Because the materials are to be used for the temple, Hiram's letter to Solomon is full of biblical reminiscences. Hiram recognizes that YHWH is greater than his own (anonymous) gods. Hiram's love for David in 1 Kings 5 becomes the love of YHWH for Israel according to Hiram (2 Chr 2:10 [11]; 9:8). In reply to Solomon's rhetorical question, "Who am I to build a house for a god that even the highest heavens cannot contain?" (2 Chr 2:5[6]),

6. Ehud Ben Zvi, "Ideological Constructions of Non-Yehudite/Peripheral Israel in Achaemenid Yehud: The Case of the Book of Chronicles," in *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2006) 195–209.

7. However, Phoenician involvement is attested at Samaria by ivories; see John W. Crowfoot and Grace M. Crowfoot, *Early Ivories from Samaria* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1938).

Hiram joins the project to show that Israel alone is not up to such a tall order. Tyre and Jerusalem overlap, and Tyre provides the backdrop for a deeper perspective on the service of YHWH's universalism.⁸

Hiram's contribution to Solomon's temple and his affirmation of YHWH's sovereignty prefigure Cyrus's role in the construction of the "second" temple. While the Queen of Sheba, Neco, and Hazael are foreign instruments in YHWH's hands, only Hiram and Cyrus are directly involved in the building of the temple of the highest God.⁹ In this way, diplomatic relations with neighboring countries and Persian involvement in the building of Jerusalem's temple are legitimated. There is no notion that the rule of YHWH will overthrow the foreign nations, as is the case in the Prophets.

The other Ketubim enhance the necessary collaboration of the *gōyīm* as cheerleaders involved in Yehud's worship of the highest god. The ode for a royal wedding in Ps 45:13[12] remembers the daughter of Tyre in the role of a client bearing wedding gifts to entreat the favor of the anonymous, universal king. Psalm 87[86]:4 lists Tyre, in addition to Rahab, Babylon, Philistia, and Ethiopia, as the northern segment of the mental frame that sets Zion as the navel of the earth.

In Kings, once Solomon's building projects are completed, King Hiram reappears as the recipient of 20 Galilean cities given to him as payment for the wood and gold he provided. Hiram is a tough businessman. As any good haggler, he lets his client know that from his point of view he has been cheated (1 Kgs 9:11–12). The Chronicler turned this snippet of a story on its head to have Hiram give Solomon cities with no bad feelings involved (2 Chr 8:2). Hence, the Chronicler paints a more ideal portrait than Kings, but it is an idealization that, in fact, underlines a harsh reality.

The Chronicler faced a dilemma that appears implicitly in his representation of Solomon's much more businesslike relations with Hiram than what is found in Kings. Hiram's acceptance of Solomon's offer of grains, wine, and oil in exchange for timber is qualified by a special clause stating that the requested logs will be delivered to Jaffa and no further (2 Chr 2:12 [16]). The breaking down of the costs between the two kings requires qualifying Sarah Japhet's claim that the Chronicler diminishes Solomon's resourcefulness and greatness.¹⁰ In this particular case, the much higher haulage costs from Jaffa to Jerusalem, shouldered entirely by Jerusalem, elevate Solomon to being an equal trade partner, in contrast to David, who was the passive recipient of Hiram's generosity. David is depicted as too poor and uncultured to build himself

8. On the notion of overlap, see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Exploring Jerusalem."

9. On Hazael's role in the Bible, see H. Ghantous, *The Elisha-Hazael Paradigm and the Kingdom of Israel* (BibleWorld; Durham: Acumen 2013), esp. pp. 48–50.

10. Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and its Place in Biblical Thought* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997) 484.

a proper palace. Having Solomon shoulder the cost for the most difficult leg of the journey for the logs keeps the Tyrians at arms's length from Jerusalem. The materials are Tyrian, but they were bought with Jerusalemite funds and transported to Jerusalem by Judahite means. The Chronicler keeps Tyrian generosity within bounds because generosity has a price, a price reflected in Neh 13:16, where Tyrian merchants live in Jerusalem to ply their trade. The text admits to the dominant position of Tyrian trade but presents it as a breach of the sanctity of Sabbath.¹¹

The ways in which the Chronicler and author of Nehemiah rework the memory of Tyre found in Kings are two sides of the same coin. Heads is a religious depiction of Tyre as a generous patron of the temple. Tails is stuck with the price of Tyre's generosity; the dominant position of Tyre and Sidon in the market in Jerusalem. Hence, theology legitimates Tyrian generosity toward the temple of Jerusalem and seeks to curtail the implications of this generosity by remembering the original temple of YHWH was a Judahite piece of art made with Tyrian materials. The prophetic texts display another approach to the dilemma.

Instead of crafting a glorious memory of the past temple through the evocation of "Tyrian" luxuries that were brought to build it, Jer 25:22, like Ps 83:7, lists Tyre among Israel's traditional enemies. Because there is no trace of any military assault on the highlands by Tyre, the classification of Tyre as an enemy plays on the standard resentment of farmers the world over, who associate trade with robbery. That this view is related to trade is obvious from Amos and Joel. Amos 1:9–10 is a general indictment of Tyre for selling entire communities to Edom. Joel 3:4 accuses Tyre of taking away Judah's silver and gold, carrying away Judah's riches to its own temples, and selling its people to the Greeks. The text then expresses hopes of revenge: the slave will become the slave trader and sell his previous master into slavery. Joel and Amos encourage Yehudites to see themselves as spiteful, self-righteous victims of external traders.

This is how many exegetes still perceive ancient Tyre. Reading prophetic texts fosters an identification with the prophetic figure who denounces the greed of merchants. Modern commentators are as virulent as the prophets in their denunciations:

Since Tyre was in a dominant position, she could easily take advantage of Judah's weakness. She may have charged high dues for commercializing Judah's products, paid very little for them, charged Judah high prices for metals, and

11. It is not crucial here to decide how far the mention of Tyrian merchants is meant to bracket the far stronger position of Sidon in the area. See Diana V. Edelman, "Tyrian Trade in Yehud under Artaxerxes I: Real or Fictional? Independent or Crown Endorsed?" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 207–46.

imposed tariffs on their distribution, or even curbed Judah's access to international markets.¹²

This quotation reflects the common confusion between memory and history. However, other prophetic texts reveal awareness that there is more to trade than a unidirectional flow of goods from the hinterland to the coast. Zechariah 9 wishes that Tyre's treasures would be thrown into the sea or devoured by fire; nevertheless, it recognizes the link between wealth and wisdom.

Instead of rejoicing over the destruction of Tyre, Zech 9:5–6 describes the shockwave generated by the destruction of Tyre and felt in the Philistine cities that acted as the primary destination for Yehudite agricultural products before they fed the Tyrian trade network. Hence, besides the caricature of Tyre as the capital of extortion, there are a number of prophetic texts that reflect a more subtle view of economic relations.

The dirge on the destruction of Tyre in Isa 23:1–18 is an amazing treatment of the subject. The passage closes with an oracle for the restoration of Tyre's fortunes after 70 years. Restoration does not imply conversion of the heart. Renewed Tyrian trade is still qualified as prostitution, but here, of a sacred kind. Tyre's profits will be used to support those who live in YHWH's presence. Wall Street remains Wall Street, but its profits find their way to Me'ah Shea'rim. Instead of stockpiling her wealth on the island, Tyre dedicates it to YHWH and sends it to the temple in Jerusalem to feed and clothe the faithful. Rather than wishing for Tyre's destruction, Isaiah accepts Tyre's dominant position as preordained by YHWH himself, so that Tyre's wealth can benefit Jerusalem.

The restoration of Tyre announced by Isaiah is in line with the omission of Tyre from the list of people committed to the netherworld (Ezek 32:17–32). Like Zechariah, Ezekiel views wealth as the cause of pride, even though wealth itself is a by-product of wisdom. Torn between genuine admiration of Tyrian business skills and envy spurred by an acute awareness of the inability to rival the wealth of the coastal cities, Ezekiel focuses on the downfall of the prince and king of Tyre.

Built like a seven-branch menorah, Ezekiel 25–32 frames Tyre as a centerpiece among Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, and Egypt. Sidon is but an appendix of Tyre (Ezek 28:20–23). Ezekiel 26 is the counterpart of Isaiah 23, minus Tyre's restoration. Tyre is destroyed for having thought that Jerusalem's downfall would be a way to replenish itself. The next chapter is a lamentation over Tyre ordered by YHWH himself. Jerusalem cannot rejoice over the fall of Tyre in the same way that Nahum gloated over the fall of Nineveh. The collaborative pattern of Chronicles is operative here as well. Instead of presenting Jerusalem as a victim of Tyrian traders, Ezekiel 27 names far-away places that

12. Martin A. Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Tyre* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2002) 115.

integrate Jerusalem within world trade networks. Because Tyrian trade brought abundance to all, the news of Tyre's destruction is received with dismay. The lamentation over the prince of Tyre and the oracle against the king of Tyre weave a colorful fabric with themes from the first chapters of Genesis and Exodus. There is a hypothesis that Ezekiel's oracles against Tyre in chap. 28 were originally directed against Jerusalem.¹³ In any case, it is clear that Tyre served as a paradigm to explain the fate of Jerusalem.

Tyre as a Template for Jerusalem

Tyre and Jerusalem both became victims of the divine wrath. Both were rebuilt after 70 years. The rebuilding is an act of judgment on the previous era: Cyrus erases Nebuchadnezzar, and the Babylonian Golah displaces the 'am hā'āreš. Remembering Tyre's relationship with David and Solomon bridges the gap between the temple of old and the new temple, establishing a continuum over the 70 years of purgation. The continuum contributes to the universalism of YHWH by employing language once reserved for Marduk's rebuilding of Babylon after 70 years and by broadening YHWH's involvement in Jerusalem's fate with his involvement in the fate of other significant cities, such as Tyre.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the parallelism between Tyre and Jerusalem produced tension, because the fates of the two cities were not identical. Whereas Ezek 26:7 claims that YHWH sent Nebuchadnezzar against Tyre in retaliation for its gloating over Jerusalem's downfall (Ezek 26:2), YHWH promises the plunder of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as a reward for his unrequited hard work against Tyre (Ezek 29:18–20). Because the focus here is on memory rather than history, there is no need to decide whether or not Ezekiel 26 is a real prophecy because it was proven wrong by the events.¹⁵ Whether Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Tyre or not, Tyre survived as a fitting paradigm for Jerusalem.

13. Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, "Montagne sainte, jardin d'Eden et sanctuaire (heiro-solymitain) dans un oracle d'Ezékiel contre le prince de Tyr (Ez 28:11–19)," in *Le mythe, son langage et son message* (ed. Henri Limet and Julien Ries; Leuven: Centre d'Histoire des Religions, 1983) 131–53.

14. Mark Leuchter, "Tyre's 70 Years in Isaiah 23,15–18," *Bib* 87 (2006) 412–17, mentions the black stone inscription of Esahaddon that mandates the rebuilding of Babylon 70 years after Sennacherib's destruction.

15. It often is claimed that Ezekiel 26 was proved wrong by the events; for a discussion on Josephus' account of the siege of Tyre, see Thomas Renz, "Proclaiming the Future: History and Theology in Prophecies against Tyre," *Tyndale Bulletin* 51 (2000) 17–58 (pp. 47–51). The discovery of a Punic Tanit-Sign on the Babylon Stele of Nabonidus suggests that Josephus' account of the siege of Tyre may have been too quickly dismissed; see Hanspeter Schaudig, "A Tanit-Sign from Babylon and the Conquest of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar II," *UF* 40 (2008) 533–45.

Yehudites, even those who had never set foot in Tyre, were aware the city was a unique place on a rock “in the middle of the sea,” surrounded by water and entered by boats that unloaded riches from all corners of the world. As a locus of memory rather than the actual city experienced physically, Tyre was experienced as a city located on the coast and as a place that was important, but distant. By making a far less explicit reference to memory than memorials and works of art, Tyre belonged to Judean cultural memory and its affect on the entire Torah community was much greater.¹⁶

So powerful was the conception of Tyre as the ultimate repository of island luxury that architects in the Hellenistic and Roman periods translated it into concrete villa complexes. Josephus designates the ostentatious pavilion Hircanus the Tobiad built at ‘Iraq el-Amir as “Tyros” (*Ant.* 12.4.1 §233). Thanks to a dam, the pavilion was surrounded by an artificial lake that gave the impression it was set on an island. The water reflected the monumental building and the large animal sculptures that flanked it and dramatized the architecture. The Lower Herodium built by Herod the Great a century later consisted of a similar pavilion located at the center of a pool accessed by small boats.¹⁷ Either the name *Tyre* assumed a wider meaning than the physical Phoenician city proper, or Tyre’s fame was so great that it inspired architects to build little Tyres on the Jordanian plateau and in the Jordan Valley. The *locus memoriae* became memorials.

Experiencing Tyre in Jerusalem

Even if Jerusalem’s pre-Herodian temple was not surrounded by water, Jerusalem was identified with Tyre. Tyre and Jerusalem were “spaces of uncertainty,” hybrid, fragmented, and unstable representations emerging from encounters and confrontations between people.¹⁸ In Jerusalem, the confrontation led to destruction at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. The destruction is explained as the punishment for sins characterized as prostitution; this prostitution is presented as the inevitable consequence of beauty and luxury (Ezek 16:15–63; 22; 24). The same logic is at work in the oracle against the anonymous prince of Tyre, except that Tyre’s luxury is the result of its wisdom and trading abilities, while Jerusalem’s riches were bestowed by YHWH. The contrast between the two cities continues as Jerusalem’s sin is presented as irresistible lust that led

16. The positive memories of Tyre led to its inclusion in the post-script to the book of Jonah that has been transmitted in the *Lives of the Prophets*. After preaching in Nineveh, Jonah returned to live with his mother in Tyre.

17. Ehud Netzer, “Tyros, the Floating Palace,” in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity* (ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins; Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000) 340–53.

18. Kenny Cupers and Markus Meissen, *Spaces of Uncertainty* (Wuppertal: Müller & Busmann, 2002) 152.

her to offer her charms without any financial compensation, while Tyre's sin is pride that led her to "give her heart as the heart of a god" (Ezek 28:6).

Jerusalem's confrontation with Tyre was commercial and so less traumatic than the memory of Edom's involvement in the sack of Jerusalem (Obadiah). Frequent interaction with Tyrian merchants gave some substance to representations of Tyre by associating actual faces with its population. The bow-yielding divinity riding the sea horse was a conspicuous symbol on Tyrian coins and probably is the source of the cherub in Ezek 28:14–16.¹⁹ Balancing the influence of the symbolism of Tyrian coins, the gems adorning the king of Tyre are a sample of Aaron's priestly garment, while the holy mountain of God suggests Jerusalem rather than Tyre (Ezek 28:13–14). Luxuries, real and imagined, caused Tyre to elevate 'her heart because of her beauty' (בִּיפִיךָ; Ezek 28:17) while Jerusalem 'trusted in her beauty' (תִּבְטָחַי בִּיפִיךָ; Ezek 16:15).

Like contemporary Berlin or Beirut, Persian and Hellenistic Jerusalem experienced major destructions and rebuildings that affected the way its inhabitants lived it as a social space and the way the producers of memory sought to have its constituency live it. The temple was intimately connected with the adjacent fortress that was manned by nonlocal military personnel and built atop the ruins of previous structures of tragic memory. Yehudites who never had a chance to perceive the real Tyre experienced the temple as a Tyrian structure whenever they set foot in Jerusalem. They were made to remember it as the successor of Solomon's temple. If Ezra's temple did not compare with how Solomon's temple was imagined, it was only because Isaiah's prophecy was not yet fulfilled. Once primed, the syphon would suck Tyre's riches into Jerusalem.

Like the shifting green line in contemporary Jerusalem, Persian sovereignty and control required the inscription of "new collective meanings, memories, and identities associated with the place."²⁰ Hence, Psalms 42 and 120–34 invite Yehudites to reclaim the space through pilgrimage to the temple, the heart of the rebuilt city. As annual rituals, pilgrimages are commemorative habits significant for the construction of memory. Congregating around the temple of Jerusalem, participating in processions toward and around it, inscribed bodily automatisms that impressed sensory memories and united the pilgrims in a mnemonic community in a far stronger way than any text would be able

19. Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, "Le Chérub de Tyr (Ez 28,14.16) et l'hyppocampe de ses monnaies," in *Prophétie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel* (ed. Rüdiger Liwak and Siegfried Wagner; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991) 29–38. In the LXX, God placed the *archon* of Tyre with the Cherub in Eden, on a holy, divine mountain, and subsequently uses the cherub to drive him out from the midst of the fiery stones. In the received Hebrew text, the king himself is a cherub.

20. Anne B. Shlay and Gillad Rosen, "Making Place: The Shifting Green Line and the Development of 'Greater' Metropolitan Jerusalem," *City & Community* 9 (2010) 362.

to do. In their encounter with the materiality of the temple, Yehudites experienced Tyre in its religious as well as economic aspects.²¹ Remembered as the successor to Solomon's temple, the Persian temple created the mnemonic community as a box of somatic resonance in which Tyre and Jerusalem were experienced in a mode of social awareness. Imagination supplied meaning by combining shared elements of memory into an abstract but permeating impression. Yehudites were made to experience Jerusalem and its temple more or less consciously as an island of spiritual treasures isolated from its surroundings. Combining impressions such as those evoked today by the names *Fort Knox* and *Wall Street*, the image of Tyre affected the way material Jerusalem was experienced. The image of Tyre as an island isolated the spiritual Jerusalem from its geographical setting. Dematerialized, Jerusalem was stripped even of its name, to become YHWH *šāmā* (Ezek 48:35).²² Bundling Tyre into the memory of Jerusalem served to dislocate Jerusalem to even higher spheres. It is how Jerusalem is experienced to this day by the pilgrims hospitalized yearly with Jerusalem syndrome.

Apart from these unfortunate pilgrims, modern memories of Jerusalem function without the biblical Tyrian prism, due to the creation of national boundaries in the 20th century, boundaries rendered impassable by the war. However, the Tyrian prism is worth remembering. It marks the revenge of memory over against history and ideology;²³ memory focuses on similarities without which no memory is possible, because only common traits can be remembered.²⁴ Memory recovers what history ignores: the thickness and permanence of social reality that history shortcuts with the presentation of significant events and individuals. Remembered apart from Tyre, Jerusalem is less Jerusalem.

21. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 4–5.

22. Jill Middlemas, "Transformation of the Image," in *Transforming Visions* (ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010) 113–38.

23. Hans Barstad, "History and Memory: Some Reflections on the 'Memory Debate' in Relation to the Hebrew Bible," in *The Historian and the Bible* (ed. Philip R. Davies and Diana V. Edelman; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2010) 1–10 (p. 8).

24. Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Michel, 1997) 137.

Nineveh as Meme in Persian-Period Yehud

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Memory, as explored by E. Casey and J. Assmann, tends toward spatialization, and the phenomenon of the modern urban landscape contains most of the ingredients from which societies concoct their pasts.¹ However, there are dangers in shuttling between our notions of cities of the near present and literary evocations of those long-lost in patterns of dead time, such as Nineveh. Think of Berlin, 2013: a city crisscrossed by Holocaust memorials and museums, with more than 2,000 brass *Stolpersteine* literally underfoot with their brutally terse tales of human disappearance, the iconic Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche as a vertical memorial to the air war, and the Checkpoint Charlie Museum (Mauermuseum) as an info-entertainment symbol of the DDR/GDR divide. However, the “facts” of National Socialism and divided Berlin remain deeply contested, partially revealed, and often buried beneath contemporary structures of the living city that communicate no accessible testimonies of its past.² Ancient Nineveh has been excavated repeatedly by archaeologists and treasure hunters; even the outlines of Sennacherib’s walls are readily visible on a Google satellite image. The Nineveh of the Bible, however, in the extended retellings of the Book of the Twelve, has almost nothing in common with the artifacts stored in the Iraq National Museum or the historicizing illustrations in most picture Bibles, and searching these resources for the seat of biblical memory is a distraction.

The fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. to a Medo-Babylonian coalition was a watershed event that reverberated throughout the ancient Near Eastern and

Author’s note: I thank Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi for the opportunity to enlist Nineveh in the burgeoning study of cities as memory.

1. Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Studies in Continental Thought; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Jan Assmann, *Die kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1999).

2. See Mary Fulbrook, “Historical Tourism: Reading Berlin’s Doubly Dictatorial Past,” in *Memory Culture and the Contemporary City: Building Sites* (ed. Uta Staiger, Henriette Steiner, and Andrew Webber; New York: Macmillan, 2009) 126–44; Janet Ward, “Sacralized Spaces and the Urban Remembrance of War,” in *ibid.*, 145–60; Charity Scribner, “Paradise for Provocation: Plotting Berlin’s Political Underground,” in *ibid.*, 161–78.

classical worlds. Nineveh became the type-story for an arrogant kingdom of fabulous size and wealth taken to task, peopled with larger-than-life actors, whose stage-calls were mediated by God or magical artifice. The events were refracted through the minds of authors as diverse as the Greek “Persika” writers, Aramaic wisdom tradents, Demotic popular narrative weavers, and the literati of Yehud. At the same time, the epic sinfulness of the Assyrian capital was repeatedly refocused and framed in narrative imagery that could be reversed, like a photographic negative, to illustrate the moral failings of Assyria’s former victims. In this study, we will contextualize the many retellings of Nineveh and its rulers, in order to situate the place it occupied in the memory of Yehud in the Persian period.

Recent scholarship has established beyond a doubt that the major cities of the Assyrian heartland, with the possible exception of Nineveh, were continuously inhabited from the destruction of the Assyrian Empire through the Parthian occupation. The ancient city temples were maintained, if under reduced circumstances, with evidence of both intellectual and material cultural continuity.³ The worship of Aššur and his *paredros* Šērū’a continued at Assur down to the 3rd century B.C.E. in the *bīt akīti ša šēri*, the New Year’s house, mixing Assyrian and Hellenistic architectural features.⁴ Cuneiform texts dated approximately between 605 and 520 B.C.E. from Uruk attest to a Temple of Aššur, the former Assyrian state god, in Uruk, and the use of Aššur as a theophoric element in personal names.⁵ The notion that the defeat of the Neo-Assyrian Empire liquidated Assyrian civilization and left Upper Mesopotamia a howling wasteland is a myth perpetuated by modern historians who should know better. That being said, Nineveh disappears from the cuneiform economic or adminis-

3. Amélie Kuhrt, “The Assyrian Heartland in the Achaemenid Period,” in *Dans les pas des Dix-Mille: peuples et pays du Proche-Orient vus par un Grec: Actes de la Table Ronde Internationale, Toulouse 3–4 février 1995* (ed. Pierre Briant; Pallas 43; Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1995) 239–54; Julian E. Reade, “Why Did the Medes Invade Assyria?” in *Continuity of Empire? Assyria, Media, Persia* (ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Michael Roaf, and Robert Rollinger; HANEM 5; Padova: Sargon, 2003) 149–56; John Curtis, “The Assyrian Heartland in the Period 612–539 BC,” in *ibid.*, 157–67. Kuhrt states emphatically that “there is strong evidence for continuities at the cultic level right through from the Late Assyrian to the Parthian period, which must be weighed before dismissing Nineveh as a deserted ruinheap in the Achaemenid period” (“Assyrian Heartland in the Achaemenid Period,” 250).

4. Peter W. Haider, “Tradition and Change in the Beliefs at Assur, Nineveh and Nisibis between 300 BC and AD 300,” in *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (ed. Ted Kaizer; Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 164; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 193–208, esp. pp. 197–98.

5. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “Yahwistic Names in Light of Late Babylonian Onomastics,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 245–66, esp. pp. 254–55, 260.

trative text corpora following 612 B.C.E.⁶ Hence, unlike Babylon, the destruction of Nineveh was “complete” in the sense that the imperial capital vanished together with the Assyrian ruling elite and army, leaving behind a Rorschach inkblot of a legend, onto which virtually anything could be projected.

*Nineveh in the Hebrew Bible*⁷

In most parts of the Bible, Assyria, destroyer of the Northern Kingdom and would-be destroyer of Zion/Jerusalem, is dabbled in garish Technicolor tones crafted to illustrate its violent and devastatingly efficient militarism. Assyria is a swarm of bees to which YHWH whistles to do his bidding (Isa 7:18), a razor with which to shave Judah’s beard and expose his genitals (Isa 7:20). It is YHWH’s staff and rod for the enactment of angry vengeance (Isa 10:5) and the brutal military force that reduced Judah to within a hair’s breadth of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa 1:9). Nineveh is a city of bloodshed, deceitful, crammed with booty (Nah 2:12), whose arrogant kings boast that none of the city gods of their victims could save them (Isa 36:18–20; 37:11–13), and whose emissaries make cheery motivational speeches (in fluent Hebrew) to the besieged inhabitants of Jerusalem, promising them they will be reduced to drinking their own urine and eating their own dung (Isa 36:12). Hindsight catharsis over the survival of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.E.⁸ and the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. expressed itself through the “miracle” of the angelic slaughter of 85,000 Assyrians before Jerusalem (Isa 37:36–38) and the gloating of Nahum over the military defeat and sexual humiliation of a feminized Assyria (Nahum 2–3). In the expanded Hebrew Bible, 2 Esdras amplifies this rhetoric by threatening Assyria with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah for its wickedness, while Judith conflates Assyria and Babylonia into a global juggernaut with the design of yoking all of humanity in the worship of “Nebuchadnezzar the Assyrian.”

6. Seleucid, Parthian, and Roman Nineveh/Ninos reveals extensive habitation, including rebuilding the temple of Nabû, the Ezida, on the acropolis, though votive inscriptions and onomastica, virtually all in Greek, point to Apollo (identified with Nabû), Zeus (Bel/Marduk), Tyche, Heracles/Gad, Egyptian Sarapis and Isis, and Hermes (Haider, “Tradition and Change in the Beliefs at Assur,” 201–4; Julian E. Reade, “Greco-Parthian Nineveh,” *Iraq* 60 [1998] 65–83). Under the Roman Emperor Claudius, Nineveh/Ninos was elevated to the rank of *Colonia Augusta Felix Niniva Claudia*.

7. The argumentation in this section presupposes the creation of the lion’s share of the Hebrew Bible in post-monarchic, Persian-period Yehud by literati scribes living, in all probability, in Jerusalem. See Ehud Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud* (JSOTSup 367; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) 99–115.

8. With the capture of Lachish, the military stronghold of Judah, with the freeing of Padi of Ekron from Hezekiah’s jail, with the collection of an enormous booty of precious metals, the extraction of promises of fealty from Hezekiah, and deportation of his daughters as political hostages, Sennacherib, having attained his *Realpolitik* goals, returned home in triumph to Nineveh without having to squander his resources physically wrecking Jerusalem the way he would wreck Babylon in 689.

While Zephaniah makes of the ruins of Nineveh a *Mahnmal*, horrifying all passers-by who can connect the moldering ruins with the once-proud Assyrian capital, the Hebrew Bible does not memorialize the monuments left in Israel, Judah, and surrounding states that testify to Assyrian military prowess. The fall of Lachish, Judah's most heavily fortified city, and the heaps of war-dead buried in mass graves are passed over in silence.⁹ Was the trauma too great for words, or was the memory itself dimmed by time and of lesser edifying import than the fate of Judah at the hands of the Neo-Babylonians? The extent to which, after 701 B.C.E., Judahite cities acquired visible Assyrian artifacts or "Assyrianized" urban spaces such as Ramet Raḥel, took part in Assyrian military and vassal rituals, and contributed corvée and tribute in the reigns of Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah is nowhere told. The chief *Mahnmal* to Assyrian aggression is Jerusalem itself, left standing "intact," if impoverished, whose message of salvation (king left on throne and temple on mount) is mocked by the fate of Sennacherib, doomed to ignominious parricide in Nineveh in the very temple of his god.

At the same time, in the historiography of Samuel-Kings, Assyria is cast in the role as one of the primary siphons through which the wealth accumulated by David, Solomon, and their successors, usually in precious metals, was drained away due to dangerously short-sighted political moves portrayed as bribes, which J. L. Wright terms "paying for peace."¹⁰ Like Ahaz, Hezekiah strips the temple and royal treasuries of bullion to buy off the reduction of Jerusalem by Tiglath-Pileser III, a temporalizing measure in the eyes of the biblical authors. Nahum takes up the theme through the image of Nineveh as a city "crammed with booty"; Jonah, perhaps, does so through the artifice of its impossibly outsized dimensions. Treatment of Nineveh in the short story of Jonah is remarkable on multiple counts, as we shall see, but, in the author's view, it presupposes this grim image of Assyrian imperial muscle-flexing, despoilation, and military defeat. However, the variety of extrabiblical treatments of Nineveh should alert us to the plethora of imaginative possibilities available to the Yehudite literati.

'Nineveh' (נִינְוָה) appears 16 times in the Hebrew Bible: Gen 10:11, 12; 2 Kgs 19:36 // Isa 37:37; Nah 1:1; 2:9; 3:7; Zeph 2:13; Jonah 1:2; 3:3a, 4, 5, 6, 7; 4:11. In Genesis 10, the Table of Nations, Nimrod, offspring of Cush (Kaššū, homeland of the Kassites, or [Ethiopian] Cush son of Ham?), is credited with

9. Avraham Faust, "Deportation and Demography in Sixth-Century B.C.E. Judah," in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritche Ames, and Jacob L. Wright; SBLAIL 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011) 91–104, esp. pp. 97–98 and bibliography cited there.

10. J. L. Wright, "The Deportation of Jerusalem's Wealth and the Demise of Native Sovereignty in the Book of Kings," in *Interpreting Exile Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (ed. B. E. Kelle, F. Ritche Ames, and J. L. Wright; SBLAIL 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011) 105–34, esp. pp. 114–18.

the eponymous founding of the great cities of Mesopotamia, including the imperial capitals Babel, Akkad(?), Uruk, Nineveh, Resen (*Dūr Šarrukīn*?),¹¹ and Kalḫu (Gen 10:8–12). Although Gen 10:10–12 mixes cities whose heydays were thousands of years apart, the list as a whole could not have been drawn up earlier than the reign of Sennacherib, when he relocated his capital from *Dūr Šarrukīn*, associated with the inauspicious death of his father, to Nineveh, creating in time what must have been the dazzling green Rome of the ancient Near East.¹² The Table of Nations does not “preach” against the cities and lands it canvases, save for the implications of “primal contagion” passed along the kinship chain from the compromised Ham, son of Noah (Gen 9:24–25).¹³

The Hebrew Scriptures, the book of cities according to R. Carroll,¹⁴ begins urban life inauspiciously with the world’s first city founded by the fugitive, brother-killing Cain (Gen 4:17). Canaan, the accursed child of Ham, became the eponymous ancestor of (construed to be “morally blighted”) Sidon, the lurid cities of the Plain, as well as the enclaves of the Canaanites slated for genocidal removal (Gen 10:15–19). Cush, who in one reading was another son of Ham, fathered Nimrod, himself the founder of Babylon, Nineveh, and the other great imperial cities of Mesopotamia (Gen 10:8–12).¹⁵ But there is no reason to believe that the authors of the primeval history took the size of these cities as predictive of their evilness or made a suspiciously modern distinction between (virtuous) rural and (immoral) urban societies.¹⁶ The book of Jonah

11. Avigdor Victor Hurowitz, “In Search of Resen (Genesis 10:12): *Dūr-Šarrukīn*?” in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Chaim Cohen et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 511–24.

12. Julian E. Reade, “Studies in Assyrian Geography: Sennacherib and the Waters of Nineveh,” *Revue d’assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale* 72 (1978) 47–72; idem, “Ninive (Nineveh),” *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* (presently ed. Michael P. Streck; 13 vols.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–2012) 9:397b–407a; Ariel M. Bagg, *Assyrische Wasserbauten: Landwirtschaftliche Wasserbauten im Kernland Assyriens zwischen der 2. Hälfte des 2. und der 1. Hälfte des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (Baghdader Forschungen 24; Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 2000) *passim*.

13. It is worth noting that the author of 2 Kgs 17:24–41 succeeds in racializing the inferiority of the inhabitants of the former Northern Kingdom by highlighting their descent from non-Yahwistic peoples deported to Samaria by the “king of Assyria.”

14. Robert P. Carroll, “City of Chaos, City of Stone, City of Flesh: Urbanscapes in Prophetic Discourses,” in “*Every City Shall Be Forsaken*”: *Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSOTS 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 45–61 (p. 56).

15. N. Roddy, “Landscape of Shadows: The Image of City in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Cities through the Looking Glass: Essays on the History and Archaeology of Biblical Urbanism* (ed. R. Arav; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 11–21, esp. pp. 18–19.

16. Lester L. Grabbe, “Sup-Urbs or only Hyp-Urps? Prophets and Populations in Ancient Israel and Socio-historical Method,” in “*Every City Shall Be Forsaken*”: *Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and

itself evinces the ancient fascination with the gigantic size of Nineveh common to Yehud and other sectors of the Mediterranean world, but there is nothing in the language to suggest that its wickedness was caused by its large size or that its wickedness was a function of its being a city as opposed to its being a rural district or tribal federation. The extreme moral ambiguity of Jerusalem/Zion and its leaders in the Bible should caution against importing anachronistic sociological models into the Hebrew Bible.

2 Kgs 19:36 // Isa 37:37, part of the dramatic narrative that describes the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, reflects historical knowledge of the assassination of Sennacherib (who and where), although the physical destruction of the cities mentioned in the “letter of Sennacherib” was the handiwork of the Neo-Babylonians, not the Sargonid Assyrians (2 Kgs 19:12–13). In the context of the overall passage, even far-away Nineveh, capital of the mighty Assyrian monarch, is not immune from patricidal passion and lust for power.

Zeph 2:13, part of an extended oracle against the nations, encompasses cities in Philistia, the nation of Moab, the Ammonites, and the Ethiopians. In the ensuing lines, Assyria and Nineveh are slated for desertification, using the stock image of a blasted cityscape inhabited by wild, uncanny fauna. Nineveh, the ‘once exultant city’ (העיר העליונה) will become a spectacle that elicits repulsion from those who travel nearby (Zeph 2:13–15). The location of Assur and Nineveh to the ‘north’ (צפון) rather than ‘east’ (קדם) suggests that the author did not know the geographical location of the Assyrian heartland.¹⁷

Two of the books in the Book of the Twelve are entirely devoted to Nineveh: Nahum, described in 1:1 as ‘an oracle against Nineveh’ (משא נִינְוָה), and Jonah, centered on the satirical and absurdist adventures of an Israelite prophet commissioned to preach against Nineveh, ‘a great city for God’ (עיר גדולה; לאלהים; Jonah 3:3), who is mortified to see the city decisively act on his warning. Nahum follows Micah in the MT version of the “Book of the Twelve” and precedes Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, pointing to the destruction of Assyria following the punishment and restoration of Jerusalem and Judah. The LXX arrangement locates Nahum after Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah, an organizational structure suggesting that the redemption of repentant Nineveh in Jonah was a temporary reprieve.¹⁸

Robert D. Haak; JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 95–123 (p. 114).

17. Daniel Hojoon Ryou believes that the expression is meant to associate Assur with the mythological connotations of צפון (*Zephaniah's Oracles against the Nations: A Synchronic and Diachronic Study of Zephaniah 2:1–3:8* [BibIntS 13; Leiden: Brill, 1995] 248–49).

18. Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, vol. 2: *Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000) 419–20.

The narrative role played by Nineveh in the Book of the Twelve evinces no historically defensible knowledge about the city apart from legends that it was, once upon a time, very big, very powerful, very far away, and very doomed. The dramaturgy of the fall of Nineveh that constitutes the book of Nahum exploits generic details about costume, weapons, fortifications, and military events that would fit any major riverine city in Syria, Mesopotamian, or Egypt. The term טפסר 'scribe', calqued from Akkadian (Nah 3:17), suggests that the author had Mesopotamia in mind, but the job title is as applicable to Babylonia (whether under Chaldean, Persian, Macedonian, or Parthian control) as it is to Sargonid Assyria. The premeditated destruction of Mesopotamian cities by flooding is a trope found in the "Lament over the Destruction of Ur" (lines 198–203), the annals of Sennacherib (Babylon in 689), Diodorus Siculus (*Historia* 2.27.1–28.7, esp. 27.1–2), and Xenophon (*Anab.* 3.4.12 [Nineveh]), and in a host of modern scholars casting about for evidence that Xerxes wrecked Babylon by flooding. None of these actions can be documented archaeologically, despite better than a century and a half of excavation with Bible in hand.¹⁹

Efforts to historicize Jonah's Nineveh are misguided. The city embodies 'moral evil' (רעה; Jonah 1:2, 3:8) 'violence' (חמס; Jonah 3:8), and basic 'ethical confusion' (לא ידע בין ימינו לשמאלו; Jonah 4:11), which aligns it with Nahum and portraiture elsewhere as a biblical metonym for perfidious Assyria, but the reader is given to know nothing about its compass direction (though it is presumably far from Tarshish!). Zeph 2:13 is either ignorant of the cardinal direction of the Assyrian heartland or chooses to overwrite it in the interest of theological didacticism. As commentators since the late 19th century note, there never was a "King of Nineveh" (Jonah 3:6), and the three-days' journey across the city (Jonah 3:3), echoing Jonah's sojourn in the belly of the big fish, is the stuff of entertaining folktale exaggeration, not a meaningful allusion to the capital city of Sargonid Assyria. Whatever the authors of Jonah and Nahum had in mind when they crafted stories about Nineveh, the historical city and its inhabitants feature in name only.²⁰

19. The topos of Xerxes diverting the Euphrates to flow through the middle of Babylon is without a shred of archaeological evidence—in fact, the cuneiform evidence for the continuity of the Euphrates throughout the Persian period is massive; see Wouter F. M. Henkelman et al., "Herodotus and Babylon Reconsidered," in *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich / Herodotus and the Persian Empire: Akten des 3. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema "Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen"* Innsbruck, 24.–28. November 2008 (ed. Robert Rollinger, Brigitte Truschneegg, and Reinhold Bichler; *Classica et Orientalia* 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011) 449–70 (p. 452). Evidence for the flooding of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. was sifted judiciously by Peter Machinist and found wanting ("The Fall of Assyria in Comparative Ancient Perspective," in *Assyria 1995* (ed. Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997) 179–95).

20. Timmer's recent *InterVarsity* commentary on Jonah accepts the mid-8th-century dating of Jonah ben Amittai, the narrative events in the book of Jonah as baldly factual

The unsavory details of Nineveh's crimes and misdemeanors are not elaborated in Nahum, Zephaniah, or Jonah. Handy notes that what constituted wicked behavior for biblical Israel and Judah—apostasy from the worship of YHWH and other “nonorthodox” cultic practices—was not projected onto other nations, which were not held to the standards of “good” Yahwists. Yehudite scribes attributed the following evils to other nations: arrogance against God; attacking either Israel or Judah; treacherousness, idolatry/blasphemy, slaughtering animals, sorcery, theft of divine or personal property, treating people as spoil, violent behavior, and war atrocities.²¹ By not spelling out the iniquities of Nineveh, however, any and all of these evils could be projected onto the city.

The powerful, pungent rhetoric of Nahum has brought exegetical anguish to generations of modern commentators, due to multiple shifts between unnamed masculine and feminine addressees.²² That the book as it stands targets Assyria through the *pars pro toto* sexual degradation and military destruction of Nineveh cannot be doubted, if the introduction in 1:1 as an oracle *against* Nineveh is held to contextualize every negative assertion, however ambiguous the denotative object of prophecy. But the exemplum of doomed Nineveh is wrought with conventions altogether familiar to an audience accustomed to the rhetoric of an oracle against the nations and the trope of military adversaries against YHWH.

A particular “hook” for the Yehudite encounter with Nineveh was its apposition with Jerusalem, explicit in Isaiah 36–39, implicit in Nahum, and strongly

and thus takes considerable pains in exploring the political and moral status of mid-8th-century Assyria. He puzzles over whether the “King of Nineveh” was an Assyrian king or a semi-autonomous governor and whether the royal act of repentance involved a *šar pūhi*, a substitute king fated to live no more than a hundred days (Daniel C. Timmer, *A Gracious and Compassionate God: Mission, Salvation and Spirituality in the Book of Jonah* [New Studies in Biblical Theology 26; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011] 63–67, 109–10). Typifying Nineveh (any period) as “a prominent city in an empire built upon violence and God-defying self-aggrandization” (p. 92) illustrates a fundamental failure to understand an ancient Near Eastern world view in which the gods/God legitimate king and country no less than YHWH legitimates biblical kingship and the biblical entities Israel and Judah. While Timmer is to be commended on his willingness to engage the formidable Assyriological secondary literature, irrelevant as it is for the interpretation of a Yehudite short story, his historicist literalism is sharp enough that he is forced to reject the “three-day’s walk” description of Nineveh as hyperbole and to amplify Jonah’s message to the Ninevites in the belief that a single prophetic sentence, lacking the credentials of a specific deity, would not have swayed public and royal opinion (pp. 94–102).

21. Lowell K. Handy, *Jonah’s World: Social Science and the Reading of Prophetic Story* (BibleWorld; London: Equinox, 2007) 76.

22. O’Brien, *Nahum*, 31–74; Laurel Lanner, “Who Will Lament Her?” *The Feminine and the Fantastic in the Book of Nahum* (LHBOTS 434; Playing the Texts 11; London: T. & T. Clark, 2006) 80–100.

hinted at in Jonah. “Jerusalem” is named in neither Nahum nor Jonah, but the contrasting fates of Nineveh and Jerusalem are patent.²³ Nahum uses the expression, “YHWH is good, a ‘stronghold’ (מַעֲזוֹ) in a day of trouble” (1:7a), which elsewhere is an expression often used in the royal psalms to exemplify Jerusalem/Zion temple theology.²⁴ Judah is told to hold its feasts and fulfill its vows (Nah 2:1[MT]), pentateuchal actions normally restricted to Jerusalem. The phrase ‘bloody city’ (עִיר דָּמִים) describes Nineveh in Nah 3:1 and is used by Ezekiel three times in his prophetic judgment of Jerusalem (Ezek 22:2; 24:4, 9). A messenger brings news of salvation to Judah, but the messengers of Nineveh shall be silenced (Nah 2:1, 14). The manifold parallels between the figure of Nineveh in Nahum and Jerusalem in Lamentations include feminine personification, sexualized physical exposure, military defeat by YHWH the Divine Warrior, crowds of corpses, transformation into a spectacle that evokes horror and contempt, a depiction of YHWH who is both “good” and “wrathful,” defeated cities that have no comforters, and both cities are punished for their sins with little elaboration on the nature of the sins.²⁵ As a rhetorical device, the linking between city and nation means that the active reader “reads” Assyria/Nineveh and Judah/Jerusalem throughout the composition.

Jonah 2:1–9, Jonah’s prayer, in all of its entertaining maladaptation to Jonah’s predicament,²⁶ twice alludes to YHWH’s holy temple as the place the disobedient prophet desires to look on again and make good his vows (Jonah 2:4, 7). Jonah 4:5–7 deals with the leafy structure that Jonah constructed for himself outside Nineveh, a place where divine providence in the guise of three supernaturally coordinated events is brought home to the hot-headed prophet. The “sukkah” that he built brings to mind the Feast of Booths, celebrating the autumnal harvest, one of the pilgrimage festivals that required all Israelites to sojourn in Jerusalem (Lev 23:33–36, 39–43; Deut 16:13–15). Jonah 3, the

23. Exceptionally, Lanner draws attention to the absence of explicit mention of Zion and Jerusalem in Nahum (“*Who Will Lament Her?*” 120). Using outdated redaction-critical methods, Jörg Jeremias has argued that the original Nahum layer crafted woe oracles against Judah, Jerusalem, and the king (*Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung in der späten Königszeit Israels* [WMANT 35; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970] 46–48). Marvin A. Sweeney believes that both Judah and Assyria are treated to an extended theological refutation of YHWH’s powerlessness against the Assyrian conquest machine, demonstrated by the historical fall of Nineveh (“Concerning the Structure and Generic Character of the Book of Nahum,” ZAW 104 [1992] 367–77). On the role of Jerusalem in Jonah, see Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 118–23.

24. Lanner argues that צָרָה is to be translated concretely as ‘female adversary’ (“*Who Will Lament Her?*” 105–7).

25. See Julia Myers O’Brien, *Nahum* (Readings; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 138–40.

26. See James S. Ackerman, “Satire and Symbolism in the Song of Jonah,” in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 213–46.

portion of the story that takes place in Nineveh proper, is patterned on Jeremiah 36, the chapter in which the scroll of Jeremiah is read before the people in the Jerusalem temple, to the princes in the palace chancellery, and to King Jehoiakim and his magnates in the royal winter house. The divine rationale is the possibility that, "hearing all the evil which I intend to do to them," YHWH will "forgive [Judah's] iniquity and sin" (Jer 36:3) if everyone "turns from his evil way" (36:7). There, the similarity between Jonah's Nineveh and Jehoiakim's Jerusalem ends: recited not once but three times, the prophetic proclamation alarmed the Jerusalemite magnates and possibly the king, but the latter's response was to burn the scroll, and there is no other indication that the audience was moved by the prophecies one way or the other.²⁷ Babylonian destruction and exile ensued in Judah; the epically wicked but reformed Ninevites were spared after a single address by Jonah. Both Jeremiah 36 and Jonah 3 also have parallels with the reading of the law before Josiah. "The unspoken word in Jonah is that the center of the physical earth for the audience was Jerusalem, not the foreign cities mentioned in the text."²⁸

If, indeed, most of the Hebrew Bible was composed in Persian Yehud by a Jerusalemite literati for a Jerusalemite literati, then the reality of Jerusalem's prophesied destruction and ongoing redemption was a core component of their world view. The memory of Nineveh as a target of prophetic condemnation could be, and was necessarily, an ingredient in the many-layered creation of the memory of monarchic Judah/Jerusalem as a site both of divine punishment and long-term compassion. A world view such as this could be pressed into duty for the satirical exploration of knowledge of divine proclamation/Scripture without understanding (note Jonah, who spectacularly failed to grasp the point that YHWH could morally "turn Nineveh around" at one point in time and turn it into desert wasteland at a later juncture), a chronic temptation of intellectual theologians.²⁹ The satire in Jonah, therefore, cuts into the self-assurance of the literati themselves as a self-critique of their role as authoritative interpreters of Israelite sacred literature.

There is every reason to believe that the sophisticated Yehudite readership of Jonah was up to the task of imagining a fictive scenario in which Nineveh, peopled by the worst rogues in the world, earned a temporary reprieve through YHWH's good pleasure by acts of repentance as fabulous as the dimensions of the city itself. That these same readers "knew" in a textbook fashion that the

27. Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 656–68. "The story of the fate of the scroll in [Jeremiah] 36 is one of the finest pieces of writing in the book. It is an example of Judaeen storytelling at its best and, especially in vv. 11–19, 20–26, creates a number of striking dramatic moments which brilliantly illuminate scenes of potential conflict and disaster" (p. 666).

28. Handy, *Jonah's World*, 35.

29. Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 109–10.

historical Nineveh had been defeated and wiped from the map a century or more earlier is patent, given the plethora of narratives available inside and outside the Hebrew Bible. If the Yehudite “rereadership” applied their “textbook” chronology of Assyro-Israelite relations to the figure of Jonah ben Amittai (2 Kgs 14:25), a prophet who flourished in the age of Jeroboam II, then it was imaginatively possible to read Jonah’s mission to Nineveh as occurring prior to the lopsided military encounters between Assyria and the Northern Kingdom and yet “know” at the same time that someday Nineveh would be expunged through divine retribution. These simultaneous readings (Nineveh was saved; Nineveh was damned and destroyed) are both essential for the narrative and theological punch of the book of Jonah.³⁰ The book of Jonah, and Nineveh, thus acted as a source of hope for the post-exilic Yehudites, pointing at the future destruction of old enemies but also at future salvation, good news for Jerusalemites living amidst the embers of monarchic dreams.

Why Nineveh? Why not Babylon? Nineveh, while not the only major imperial capital city of the ancient world to be destroyed, was certainly the one most proximately familiar and relevant to a Yehudite audience. Also, rampantly negative biblical reputation aside, Nineveh/Assyria “failed” to destroy the holy city of Jerusalem, whereas Chaldean Babylon/Babylonia did, and Babylon was a thriving, satrapal capital when Jonah was composed—asking the Yehudite readers to imagine the king of Babylon and company wearing sackcloth and ashes may have exceeded their imaginative broad-mindedness and might have been politically unhealthy to boot. Nineveh, on the other hand, was a helpless ghost, a dirigible memory susceptible to 10,000 variant retellings with no angry Assyrians left to disavow the Bible’s artistic license.

Handy believes that the literary trope of “the Great Ruler of the world” encountered in Esther, Daniel, and Judith typifies Jonah’s “King of Nineveh.”³¹ “Great rulers of the world” are foreign (neither Israelite nor Judahite), male, enamored of their power and prestige, non-Yahwists, highly emotional, and branded with the marks of historical as well as literary rulers. Their kingdoms are identifiable as part of the ancient Near East, and they pose a potential threat to Israel and/or Judah. While I am less certain that this trope guided the creation of the king of Nineveh in Jonah, there is no doubt that this stock character was available to the Yehudite readers for mapping onto the story-board of the “king of Nineveh.” Handy maintains that the “great ruler of the world” meme in Jonah charts a somewhat uncharacteristic path insofar as the King expeditiously comes to the realization that his rulership is due solely to the good pleasure of the deity—and that realization rankles Jonah as further evidence for ethically educatable Gentiles and a YHWH capable of realigning even distant Nineveh with his cosmic plan. Given the ideology of Egyptian, Persian,

30. A point cogently hammered home in *ibid.*, 14–33.

31. Handy, *Jonah’s World*, 80–82.

Mesopotamian, and Yehudite kingship to which the scribes of Yehudite Jerusalem were necessarily exposed, the king of Nineveh brokered the bond of heaven and earth in his person, mediating utopian prosperity to the land or the bitter fruits of divine displeasure.

The speech of the penitent king of Nineveh (Jonah 3:7–9) has resonances with Moses' pleading with the Israelites in the desert, establishing this king as a Yahwistic apologist alongside Hiram of Tyre, the Queen of Sheba, and Pharaoh Necho in 2 Chronicles.³² Cyrus assumes the Davidic mantle of the rebuilder of the destroyed Jerusalem temple, seemingly with the blessing of the Chronicler (2 Chr 36:23). The rulers of both Egypt and Persia, Achaemenid Yehud's strongest neighbors, are given remarkably positive roles in 2 Chronicles, creating space, as it were, within the readership of Jerusalem, to encounter a king of Nineveh prepared to abase himself and his people before YHWH. Obedience to the King of Nineveh is immediate and universal (including the cattle), echoing that of the sailors to their captain and the subjugation of the natural world (ocean, big fish, *qiqayon*, worm, sirocco) to YHWH—everything and everyone in the story save for Jonah. Yet it is the activity of an Israelite prophet that transforms wicked Nineveh into a saintly city, just as Israelite intervention saves the Persian Empire in Esther from genocidal folly and a Jewish prophet steers other pagan kings rightly in Daniel 6 and *Bel and the Dragon*. Jonah, a product of scribal elites with dual allegiance to Yehud and imperial Persia, breathes a world vision in which hierarchical obedience to authority is the norm, even though the paramount authority, loftier even than the Persian king of kings, is YHWH.

In conclusion, if the Yehudite scribal authors of Jonah saw “their” Persian Empire in the figure of Nineveh, then flyspeck Yehud, through an act of disciplined imagination, was believed capable of wielding power to benefit all members of the imperial body politic through submission to YHWH's will. This was a comforting message for a feeble political entity with a cultural memory burdened by civil wars, devastating military defeats, and mass deportations. That the major dramaturgy of Jonah takes place outside Israel and Judah, and, uniquely, dispatches an Israelite prophet to preach doom/conversion to a Gentile city, situates the work among other literary evocations of Jewish existence in the Diaspora. No political power was so mighty that YHWH could not bring it to account, not even Sargonid Assyria (Isaiah/2 Kings, Zephaniah, Nahum). Even so, the destruction of Nineveh could act as a cautionary signifier for the fall of any empire, including Yehudites harboring imperial aspirations for their subprovince. Finally, no crime was so black that YHWH could not show mercy in the face of abject repentance, not even the epic aggressions of Assyria or the

32. See Ehud Ben Zvi, who uses the felicitous expression “Israelization” of these gentile rulers (“When the Foreign Monarch Speaks,” in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* [ed. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 263; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999] 209–28).

chronic apostasies of Israel and Judah. Nineveh, accordingly, functioned as a wildcard for theological mediation: a prophecy of doom is fulfilled (Nineveh was destroyed); a prophecy of doom is averted (Nineveh was “turned around”). How many of the tormenting theodical conundra of postmonarchic Yehud did the polyvalent figure of Nineveh address?

Nineveh Outside the Hebrew Bible

“Fall of Nineveh Chronicle” BM 21901 (96-4-9, 6)

This tablet recounts years 10–17 of the reign of Nabopolassar (616–609 B.C.E.), covering the period in which the primary Assyrian citadels of Assur, Nineveh, and Harran fell to the Medes and Babylonians. In laconic, dry language narrating a litany of troop movements, destroyed cities, prisoners of war, “god-napping,” and plunder, BM 21901 does not include overt justifications for the military action, though the pro-Babylonian context is patent.³³ Beginning with year 14, the year in which Nineveh fell, the Medes are referred to by the evil term “Ummān-manda,” despite the *entente cordiale* supposedly concluded between Cyaxares and Nabopolassar.³⁴ The currently available Akkadian chronographic works that postdate 612 B.C.E. do not dwell on the fall of Nineveh.³⁵ In the “Uruk Prophecy,” the final Neo-Assyrian kings establish a predictive pattern that could be “mapped” against current Persian or Seleucid rulers, but the city of Nineveh plays no explicit role in this.³⁶ On the whole, the Hebrew Scriptures exhibit little trace of the discursive, “Fall of Nineveh Chronicle”-type patterning in its imaginative reanimations of Assyrian Nineveh.

Sarbanabal and Sarmuge Legends (Papyrus Amherst 63)

Egypto-Aramean fixation on the Assyrian royal house expressed itself through the remarkable Papyrus Amherst 63, with its pro-Assyrian narration of the fratricidal strife between Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šum-ukīn (Sarbanabal and Sarmuge, 17 line 5–20 line 9).³⁷ Written in Demotic script, the Aramaic

33. I take exception to Jean-Jacques Glassner’s assertion that the phrase ‘they visited a major defeat on a numerous people’ conveys a judgmental tone (*Mesopotamian Chronicles* [SBLWAW 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004] 87).

34. Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5; Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1975) 94:38; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 220:38.

35. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, *passim*; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, *passim*.

36. JoAnn Scurlock, “Whose Truth and Whose Justice? The Uruk and Other Later Akkadian Prophecies Re-Visited,” in *Orientalism, Assyriology and the Bible* (ed. Steven W. Holloway; Hebrew Bible Monographs 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006) 449–67.

37. Richard C. Steiner, “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” in *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 1: *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr.; 3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:322–27.

texts dates to the 4th/3rd century B.C.E. and is part of a larger document primarily devoted to a New Year's liturgy for the pantheon of an exilic community from *Rš'p'rš*, who may have sojourned in Bethel prior to relocation in Persian-period Upper Egypt. Although the liturgy bears striking resemblance to portions of the texts in the Hebrew Bible, the "Tale of Two Brothers and Two Cities," Ashurbanipal and *Šamaš-šum-ukīn*, Nineveh and Babylon, as reconstructed by Steiner, echoes the narrative tradition that led to the popular Greek tales about the last king of Assyria, Sardanapallus, who immolated himself together with his chattel and treasures. Immediately before the Ashurbanipal/*Šamaš-šum-ukīn* recital, Papyrus Amherst 63 preserves fragments of a lament for Nineveh (17 lines 1–5): "Ni<ne>veh is (nothing but) swamps. There are swamps in Ni<ne>veh; it [has tur]ned into mud. T<o> (lit., down to) the ground it has been razed (lit., thrown down)." ³⁸ Given the context of the latter composition, there is no reason to believe that the fall of Nineveh was an occasion for celebration, as it is in the book of Nahum. Did these stories of the greatness and destruction of Nineveh bring a memorialized solace to the exiles of *Rš'p'rš*, even as the biblical stories of the chosenness of Jerusalem and its destruction, along with its quarrelsome royal house, wrought a shared identity, if not solace, for the inhabitants of Yehud? ³⁹ The Gothic fascination with lost inheritance, dynastic conflict, and parricide evident throughout the Hebrew Scriptures extends to Nineveh in the voyeuristic details of Sennacherib's assassination and succession in 2 Kgs 19:36–37 / Isa 37:37–38.

The Fall of Nineveh in Seleucid Pseudepigraphic Apologetics

The pending fall of Nineveh figures in pseudepigraphic correspondence between Nabopolassar and *Šīn-šarra-iškun* as a historicizing tool to exegete the usurpation of Demetrius I Sōtēr by Alexander Balas in 150 B.C.E. Two Late Babylonian letters by the same hand (BM 55467 and CTMMA 2 no. 44), copied in 150 B.C.E. according to the restored colophon in CTMMA 2 no. 44, purportedly recount a tense and bellicose exchange between Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.E.), the Babylonian king who coordinated the destruction of Nineveh with the Medes, and *Šīn-šarra-iškun* (623?–612 B.C.E.), the penultimate Neo-Assyrian king who perished with his capital, Nineveh. ⁴⁰ The better pre-

38. Ibid., 322.

39. Scurlock speculates intriguingly that this narrative preserves a pro-Persian account that correlates the perfidious and suicidal *Šamaš-šum-ukīn* (= Nabonidus) with the virtuous Ashurbanipal (= Cyrus II), with a likely echo in Belshazzar's feast in biblical Daniel ("Whose Truth and Whose Justice?").

40. BM 55467: see Pamela Gerardi, "Declaring War in Mesopotamia," *AfO* 33 (1986) 30–38; CTMMA 2 no. 44: W. G. Lambert, "No. 44: Historical Literature: Letter of *Šīn-šarra-iškun* to Nabopolassar," in *Literary and Scholastic Texts of the First Millennium B.C.* (ed. Ira Spar and W. G. Lambert; Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art 2; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Brepols, 2005) 203–10.

served BM 55467 begins with a litany of “crimes against Akkad” committed by *Šîn-šarra-iškun*: he plundered Esagila and Babylon, slew the elders of the city, bringing military defeat, darkness and rebellion to the land (obv. 1–9). Nabopolassar, divinely appointed by Marduk ‘to avenge Akkad’ (Babylonia) (*ana turru gimil māt Akkadī*, obv. 12), is specifically commissioned by the god to destroy Nineveh, the city of Sennacherib, son of Sargon, ‘litter of a house-slave’ (*ilittum dušmû*, rev. 8). Sennacherib’s ferocious destruction of Babylon in 689 passed into legend, the Assyrian war crime extraordinaire. The poorly preserved CTMMA 2 no. 44 superficially acknowledges *Šîn-šarra-iškun*’s role in Assyrian guilt against Nabopolassar, “whom Marduk, lord of heaven and earth, authorized ‘the avenging of Akkad’” (*turru gimilli māt Akkadī*, obv. 1–2). Despite Lambert’s reading of CTMMA 2 no. 44 as a historical letter written by a failing Assyrian king desperately trying to curry favor, the letter bears every mark of unilateral Babylonian apologetics and should be classed with other “royal” letters from Mesopotamian rulers bent on justifying military action. E. Frahm astutely relates the copying of both letters to the fall of Antioch on the Orontes to the success of Alexander Balas, the Roman-sponsored pretender to the throne of Antiochus IV Epiphanēs, hypothesizing that “the Late Babylonian scribe who studied the text [CTMMA 2 no. 44] did so because the legendary assault on the Assyrian capital provided a historical model for the more recent one at Antioch, which had just made news in Babylon.”⁴¹

In this Akkadian pseudepigraphic work, the conflict between Seleucid claimants to the throne uses events that transpired almost half a millennium earlier as an apologetic foil to “justify” the actions of a Roman-protégé usurper. Yehudite readers had the ideological privilege of casting Sennacherib in the role of a bold blasphemer, whose taunts, recalling Neo-Babylonian and not Neo-Assyrian military victories, led to the destruction of the “invincible” Assyrian army, thus magnifying the geopolitical importance of YHWH, little Judah, its king, and its prophets, 2 Kgs 18:19–19:37. Even Nineveh, at the height of its unparalleled physical build-out toward the end of Sennacherib’s

On the extraordinary difficulty of charting the course of events in the final decades of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–330 bc* (2 vols.; Routledge History of the Ancient World; London: Routledge, 1995) 2:540–46; Julian E. Reade, “The Accession of Sinsharishkun,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 23 (1970) 1–9.

41. Eckart Frahm, “On Some Recently Published Late Babylonian Copies of Royal Letters,” *NABU* 2 (2005) 43–46 (p. 45). In “Memories of the Fall of Nineveh,” an unpublished paper delivered in the Assyriology and the Bible section of the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, November 2010, Michael B. Dick dealt judiciously with these texts and, intriguingly, teased out elements in the descriptions of Demetrius I by Polybius, Josephus, and M. Junianus Iustinus that echo the conduct of the notorious Sardanapallus, the last king of Assyria according to Ctesias of Cnidus and other Greco-Roman historians.

reign, could not shield the colossus of a king from familial betrayal and a sordid death far from the battlefield, any more than *Sîn-šarra-iškun* / Demetrius I Sōtēr could escape payment for his “crimes and misdemeanors” at the hands of Nabopolassar / Alexander Balas. However, for the sake of speculation, what if the author of the Seleucid pseudepigraphic work had “reformed” *Sîn-šarra-iškun* and his Nineveh, or the author of 2 Kgs 18:19–19:37 had “reformed” Sennacherib and his Nineveh and added a tale of a big fish and other hiatuses to the natural order as miraculous as the *prestissimo* repentance of the king and his arch-evil city?

Nineveh in Greek “Persika” Literature

In 1995, T. Bolin endeavored to abstract a popular image of Nineveh in Greek sources as the paradigm of a city, now totally expunged from landscape and map, ruled at its fall by a mad and effeminate king, Sardanapallus.⁴² The legend of Sardanapallus, an Orientalizing mishmash of pure invention and confused memories of the civil war between Ashurbanipal and *Šamaš-šum-ukin* (650–648),⁴³ was known in some guise to Herodotus and may have even informed our earliest mention of Nineveh in Greek sources as “A city which is small but perched on a peak, ruled in accordance with nature, is stronger than senseless Nineveh” (6th century B.C.E., Phocylides of Miletus).⁴⁴ If the telling of the Sardanapallus story by Diodorus Siculus is indeed largely dependent on the *Persika* of Ctesias of Cnidus, then tales of mad Sardanapallus were circulating toward the end of the Persian period and were probably available to the cosmopolitan Jerusalemite literati who composed and reread Jonah. Bolin, to his credit, attempted to bracket the default position in Jonah studies, which has been that the earliest biblical readership could only imagine a Nineveh as the ruthless *Wehrmacht* excoriated in the Bible and elsewhere in the ancient Near East. The Greek stories about Nineveh, even those that parade the decadence of Sardanapallus, however, emphasize the extraordinary military prowess of the earlier Assyrian interregnum, note that the Assyrian army was formidable until the very end, and aver that the effeminate Sardanapallus enjoyed military victories that nearly quashed the Median revolt.⁴⁵ Unlike the Bible, none of the Sardanapallus stories attribute the fall of Nineveh to an act of vengeance against former Assyrian depredations. On the contrary, Arbaces, a Median

42. Thomas M. Bolin, “‘Should I Not Also Pity Nineveh?’ Divine Freedom in the Book of Jonah,” *JSOT* 67 (1995) 109–20.

43. John D. A. Macginnis, “Ctesias and the Fall of Nineveh,” *Illinois Classical Studies* 13/1 (1988) 37–42.

44. Phocylides, *Sententiae* (TLG 1604.001) 4:2.

45. See the sources cited in Jan P. Stronk, *Ctesias’ Persian History*, part 1: *Introduction, Text, and Translation* (Geschichte 2; Düsseldorf: Wellem, 2010) 60–150, 153–66; and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones and James Robson, *Ctesias’ History of Persia: Tales of the Orient* (Routledge Classical Translations; London: Routledge, 2010) 113–48.

general under Sardanapallus, conspires with a Chaldean priest to oust the Assyrian king 'because the Assyrian lacked nobility' (ὅτι ἀπορία γενναίου ἀνδρὸς οὗτος, Suidae Lexicon, α, 3753, Arbaces).

Nineveh, eponymous foundation by Ninus, was cast as the largest city in the inhabited world, a rectangle 150 by 90 stadia in length, with walls 100 feet high, wide enough for 3 chariots to travel abreast (Diodorus Siculus, *Historia*, 3.1–3). The myth of a gargantuan Nineveh, widely circulated in classical sources, is probably behind the three-days'-journey dimensions of the city in the biblical book of Jonah.⁴⁶ Confusion over the title of the Assyrian king in Jonah could reflect reliance on the *Persika* tradition or could also be a deliberate narrowing of the scope of activity in order to exaggerate the implicit parallels between the type cities Nineveh and Jerusalem. The figure of the Assyrian king in Nahum is feminized, but that was a common rhetorical gambit flung at warriors in texts as diverse as Hittite vassal treaties and Neo-Assyrian narrative reliefs.⁴⁷ Far from insane, the King of Nineveh in Jonah behaves prudentially in the face of overwhelming calamity—if anyone's sanity in the story is suspect, it is Jonah's.

Pattern of Successive World Empires Beginning with Assyria

The notion that Assyria was the first of the Eastern nations to control an empire spanning much of Asia, followed by Media and then Persia, is possibly an invention of Herodotus.⁴⁸ Evidence is wholly lacking that the Achaemenid Persians subscribed to such an ideology.⁴⁹ Herodotus promised a book-length treatment devoted to the Assyrians but failed to produce it. Ctesias of Cnidus, personal physician of Artaxerxes II and his family, wrote a sensationalized court novella with the same domino-fall progression of empires that emphasized the cruel military prowess of the Assyrians, ending in the epic decadence of Sardanapallus (books 1–3, the *Assyriaca*).⁵⁰ The Assyrian protagonists of

46. It also is worth noting that the title "King of Nineveh" is not found in cuneiform sources but appears in the Greek Sardanapallus legends and the biblical book of Jonah (Thomas M. Bolin, *Freedom beyond Forgiveness: The Book of Jonah Re-examined* [JSOTSup 236; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997] 138–39).

47. See Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (HSM 62; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004) 149–53.

48. Robert Drews argues that the lost *Persika* of Hellanicus of Lesbos, an older contemporary of Herodotus, surveyed Assyrian, Median, and Persian history (*The Greek Accounts of Eastern History* [Publications of the Center for Hellenic Studies; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973] 22–24).

49. Josef Wiesehöfer, "The Medes and the Idea of the Succession of Empires in Antiquity," in *Continuity of Empire? Assyria, Media, Persia* (ed. G. B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, and R. Rollinger; HANEM 5; Padova: Sargon, 2003) 391–96, esp. pp. 392–93.

50. On the checkered history of Ctesias among modern scholars, see Llewellyn-Jones and Robson, *Ctesias' History of Persia*, 22–35.

Ctesias could be exempla of courage and intelligence, as the figure of Semiramis that dominates the *Assyriaca* is clearly intended to foreshadow Parysatis, wife of Darius II and Ctesias' patroness. The works of both Herodotus and Ctesias, part of a sizeable stream of Greek histories (labeled the *Persika*) that dealt with Eastern countries and the Helleno-Persian wars, have much in common with the genres of the Davidic Court History and the book of Esther. At some point, the Seleucids added their own empire to the earlier threefold pattern. Daniel 2 seemingly adopted this schema, substituting the Babylonians for the Assyrians for the sake of narrative logic.⁵¹ By the 1st century B.C.E., numerous Greek and Roman authors exploited this 4 + 1 pattern (Assyria-Media-Persia-Macedonia + Rome),⁵² in most cases reworking Ctesias's *Assyriaca* in order to illustrate how the savage Assyrian military machine crumbled from within, passing the torch to other powers ultimately fated to yield their possessions in turn to the next rival empire.

Inaros Legends in Demotic Literature

The 7th-century invasions of Egypt by the Assyrians and their expulsion acquired lasting traction in the Egyptian imagination. The historical Esarhaddon campaigned in Egypt in 674 and 671 B.C.E., capturing fabled Memphis and forcing Cushite Taharqa to flee for his life. According to Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, Esarhaddon installed several rulers in the Delta, including Necho I, Petubastis, Bokennife, Nehka, Nakhthornashen, and Paqrur.⁵³ Ashurbanipal attempted to consolidate his father's holding in 667–666 B.C.E. but lost control of a reunited Egypt to Psammetichus I in 664. Filtered memories of the Assyrian interregnum and ultimate defeat persisted in a number of compositions preserved in late Demotic texts from the Tebtunis temple library, but, judging from the badly damaged remnants of a tomb inscription at Sheikh Faḍl, an

51. See John J. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* (FOTL 20; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 52; André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (trans. D. Pellauer; Atlanta: John Knox, 1976) 50; John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia 27; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 166–70; Wiesehöfer, "Medes and Succession of Empires," 394–96.

52. Doron Mendels, "The Five Empires: A Note on a Propagandistic Topos," *American Journal of Philology* 102 (1981) 330–37 (p. 334 n. 16).

53. Necho, Akk., *Nikkû*, Eg., *N-k̃.w*; Petubastis, Akk., *Putu-Bāšti*, Eg., *P̃-ti-wbšt-t*; Bokennife, Akk., *Bukunanni'pi*, Eg., *Bk-n-nf̃i*; Nehka, Akk., *Naḥkê*, Eg., *Nḥ-k̃*; Nakhthornashen, Akk., *Naḥti-huru-ansini*, Eg., *Nḥt-Hr-ñ-sn.w*; and Paqrur, Akk., *Pa-qruru*, Eg., *P̃-ḳrr*. See Michael P. Streck, "Nikkû," in *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, vol. 2/2: L–N (ed. Heather D. Baker; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001) 963; Eckart Frahm, "Naḥkê," in *ibid.*, 922; *idem*, "Naḥti-huru-ansini," in *ibid.*, 922; Ariel M. Bagg, "Pa-qruru," in *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, vol. 3/1: P–Š (ed. Heather D. Baker; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001) 988; Raija Mattila, "Putu-Bāšti," in *ibid.*, 1002; *idem*, "Bukunanni'pi," in *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, vol. 1/2: B–G (ed. Karen Radner; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001) 350.

Aramaic version circulated as early as the first half of the 5th century B.C.E. The common thread linking these tale-cycles is Inaros of Athribis,⁵⁴ son of Bokennife, and Inaros's descendants, who enact heroic roles as they best Esarhaddon, his shape-shifting sorceress, and his army. According to Ryholt, the Inaros cycle represents the largest unified group of literary texts from ancient Egypt, comprising fully one-third of the narrative papyri from the Tebtunis temple library, dating to the 1st or 2nd century C.E.⁵⁵ Given the lateness of the Tebtunis texts and the many correspondences with the historiographic biblical treatments of the Assyrians, septuagintal influence cannot be ruled out, though one must reserve judgment until Ryholt's publication of the texts is complete.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, inclusion of Achaemenid Persian deities, geographical terms, and loanwords suggest that significant portions of the Inaros Cycle were composed in Egypt during the Persian period.

In one fragment of the *Inaros Epic*, "Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib, the chief of Assur" takes counsel from Sinuqi, "prophet of Bel and priest of Nabu," who nevertheless takes an oath by the supreme Persian deity Ahura Mazda. Esarhaddon is assured that Inaros, who is campaigning before the fortress of Alvand (for example, *šlwnt*, Mount Alvand, south of Ecbatana?), "will not turn to Nineveh, our district" but will die of hunger and thirst. Sinuqi instructs Esarhaddon to write a letter to Inaros, which is given to a 'mounted messenger' (*hgr*, a Persian loan word; compare Greek ἄγγαρος).⁵⁷

Another fragment relates the story of Esarhaddon's sorceress, who promises "by *šlʿ*, the great fire of the east" (Atar, son of Ahura Mazda?) to deliver the Egyptian to the Assyrian king. At the Red Sea, she changes herself into a gigantic 'griffin' (*srrf*) and engages the army of Inaros. Inaros himself slays the Assyrian sorceress in a narrative framed by the mythological battle between Horus and Apophis. A third fragment seems to bring Paqur to Esarhaddon's palace, where he enters the king's sleeping quarters, perhaps to humiliate him.⁵⁸

54. Joachim F. Quack reconstructs "Inaros, King of Athribis" from two witnesses to Ashurbanipal's Prism C, in the narrative listing the Delta rulers installed by the Assyrian king ("Inaros, Held von Athribis," in *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag* [ed. Robert Rollinger and Brigitte Truschneegg; Oriens et Occidens: Studien zu antiken Kulturkontakten und ihrem Nachleben 12; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006] 499–505).

55. Kim S. R. Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," in *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen* (ed. Jan Gerrit Dercksen; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten te Leiden 100; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004) 483–510.

56. Idem, *Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library* (Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 35; Carlsberg Papyri 10; Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, [2013]). As of February 10, 2013, I was unable to access this work.

57. Idem, "Assyrian Invasion of Egypt," 492–93.

58. Ibid., 493–95.

In *Djoser and Imhotep*, known from a single Tebtunis papyrus dated to the 1st or 2nd century C.E., Third Dynasty figures are blended in a narrative about an Egyptian expedition to Assyria in order to recover the 42 divine limbs of Osiris, a mythological motif evocative of Egyptian anguish over the historical loss (capture and deportation) of divine images by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. *Djoser and Imhotep* cast the Assyrian kings in the role of the Egyptian fratricidal deity, Seth. A battlefield duel ensues between an Assyrian sorceress and Imhotep, both of whom animate wax Golem-esque figures to wage war, a battle of cosmic dimensions because the Assyrian Golem is Geb, while Imhotep uses the sky goddess Nut. In the second main fragment, the Assyrians have lost the battle and yield heavy tribute to Pharaoh Djoser. Djoser accompanies the Assyrian host back to Nineveh in order to recover the 42 divine limbs, receiving submission and tribute from every city he approaches on the way to Nineveh.⁵⁹

Egypt retained Nineveh and its Sargonid kings as potent memories susceptible to imaginative reformulation eight centuries after the historical extirpation of the Assyrian Empire, although the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. does not resonate in the extant retellings. The Egyptian storytellers refashioned national heroes into weapons mighty enough to defeat the Assyrian invaders, exact political submission, and redress the scandal of deported divine images.⁶⁰ In the Hebrew Bible, the one hero capable of besting the Assyrians was YHWH.

The Aramaic Sheikh Faḍl Inscription

This inscription, found in a tomb in Lower Egypt, though grievously damaged, certainly mentions historical figures related to the Sargonid invasions of Egypt: Esarhaddon, Taharqa, and Necho. If the restoration by Ryholt and Vittmann is accepted, the name Inaros appears in the same narrative frame as the 7th-century actors.⁶¹ The broken reading of line 12 mentions Esarhaddon and (something) that was placed in a sarcophagus, possibly Esarhaddon himself. If indeed the Sheikh Faḍl Inscription is related to the same narrative tradition that spawned the Inaros legends preserved in the Tebtunis temple Demotic manuscripts, here Nineveh is the type of an invasive kingdom requiring defeat, whether by human resistance or divine manipulation.⁶²

59. Ibid., 500–502.

60. I am reluctant to probe this intriguing material further until final publication of the relevant Tebtunis temple library texts.

61. Günter Vittmann, “Ägyptische Onomastik der Spätzeit im Spiegel der nordwestsemitischen und karischen Nebenüberlieferung,” in *Alterorientalische und semitische Onomastik* (ed. Michael P. Streck and Stefan Weninger; AOAT 296; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002) 85–107; Ryholt, “Assyrian Invasion of Egypt,” 496–97.

62. Tawny L. Holm, “The Sheikh Faḍl Inscription in Its Literary and Historical Context,” *Aramaic Studies* 5 (2007) 193–224.

In addition to Inaros of Athribis, contemporary of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, an Inaros of Libya mounted a sustained Egyptian revolt against Artaxerxes I in 464–454 B.C.E. with Athenian assistance. Xerxes' satrap Achaemenes was slain by Inaros's forces at Papremis in the Delta. The Athenians concluded a truce with the Persians, and Inaros was eventually captured and crucified.⁶³ It is not a difficult stretch to imagine how the deeds of the Persian adversary, Inaros of Libya, were melded with those of an Assyrian-era Delta ruler of the same name in order to create an all-purpose superhero capable of worsting the mighty Assyrian army and its latter-day incarnation in the Persian interregnum. Did the Sheikh Faḍl Inscription comfort the tomb's inhabitant with a message of hoped-for defiance against the Persian Empire, safely cloaked beneath a tale of Assyrian humiliation at the hands of Egyptian rulers?

Aḥiqar Legends

The colorful legends surrounding Aḥiqar, a (historic?) counselor to Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, date to at least the 5th century B.C.E. and were reworked in narratives as temporally, linguistically, and geographically diverse as the *Aesop Romance*, the *Arabian Nights*, and the book of Tobit.⁶⁴ In the Syriac, Armenian, and Arabic versions,⁶⁵ Aḥiqar, condemned to death through the machinations of his faithless nephew, is brought out of hiding in order to rescue the Assyrian king Sennacherib, who is unable to meet the impossible challenges posed by the unnamed Pharaoh of Egypt. Aḥiqar travels to Egypt, trumps the Egyptians at their own magic, and returns to Assyria with the victor's tribute. Unfortunately, the Aramaic Elephantine fragments of *Aḥiqar* preserve none of the frame narrative concerning the Assyrian king and the Pharaoh,⁶⁶ and we are left to wonder how this segment of the court romance was adapted for consumption in Persian-period Egypt. The Cairo Demotic fragment, as reconstructed by Ryholt, includes a reference to a rebelling army that

63. The story of Inaros of Libya is attested by Herodotus, Diodorus, Thucydides, Ctesias, and a Greek inscription from Samos that identifies Inaros as the son of Psammetichus, king of Egypt (as does Thucydides); see *ibid.*, 207.

64. Frederick C. Conybeare, James Rendel Harris, and Agnes Smith Lewis, eds., *The Story of Aḥiqar from the Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Greek and Slavonic Versions* (London: Clay, 1898); James M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Aḥiqar* (Johns Hopkins Near Eastern Studies; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983) 3–11; Michael Weigl, *Die aramäischen Achikar-Sprüche aus Elephantine und die alttestamentliche Weisheitsliteratur* (BZAW 399; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 1–11.

65. Fabrizio Pennacchietti, "Il testo siriano antico di Aḥiqar," in *Il saggio Aḥiqar: Fortuna e trasformazioni di uno scritto sapienziale. Il testo più antico e le sue versioni* (ed. Riccardo Contini and Cristiano Grottanelli; Studi biblici 148; Brescia: Paideia, 2005) 193–225; Paolo Rostagno Giaiero, "Tre recensioni arabe della *Storia di Ḥayqār*," in *ibid.*, 227–53.

66. Riccardo Contini, "Il testo aramaico di Elephantina," in *ibid.*, 113–39.

has arrived in Ni[neveh],⁶⁷ and the anachronistic dyad “Assyria and Nineveh” features as the geographical locus of the Assyrian kings in the Slavonic, Armenian, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions. In common with other streams of ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, the Assyrian court is portrayed as neither chronically evil nor especially praiseworthy but is instead a vast bureaucracy in which wily counselors deftly guide their clueless kings through a maze of statecraft and intrigue, evoking shades of Handy’s “great ruler of the world.”

Tobit

In Tobit, a Hellenistic Jewish adaptation of the Aḥiqar legends, the Joseph novella, and Job, pagan Nineveh is a place of moral iniquity, where fleeing Jewish exiles are randomly slain by Sennacherib and their corpses left to rot, with a ban on their burial. The wisdom and piety of Tobit prevails in the end, demonstrating the opportunistic alignment of politically weak Diaspora Jews with imperial power and wealth in Nineveh.⁶⁸ It is an uneasy and temporary alignment, however, because the destruction of Nineveh by the Medes was expected and celebrated prior to Tobit’s death (Tob 14:15). Indeed, the frame in chaps. 1 and 14 starkly contrasts the cities of Nineveh (mentioned 18 times) with Jerusalem (16 times). Nineveh is the Land of the Dead, where pagans and apostate Israelites abide, while Jerusalem is the locus of the postexilic temple of God restored to its former glory, where pious Jews gather for the appointed feasts as prescribed in Deuteronomy, Gentiles will put away their idolatry and pagan worship, and “all who love the Lord God in truth and righteousness will rejoice, showing mercy to our brethren” (Tob 14:7, RSV). Regarding Nineveh, geographical and regnal inconcinnities abound, highlighting the fact that Tobit’s Nineveh is a symbol of pagan judgment doomed by moral intransigence and prophetic proclamation.⁶⁹

The Jewish tension perceived between the fates of Nineveh in Jonah and Nahum is highlighted by the Greek versions of Tobit. Tobit 14:3–4 in the

67. Ryholt, “Assyrian Invasion of Egypt,” 498. See also Marilina Betrò, who prefers to reconstruct the break as N[adin] (“La tradizione di Aḥiqar in Egitto,” in *Il saggio Aḥiqar: Fortuna e trasformazioni di uno scritto sapienziale. Il testo più antico e le sue versioni* [ed. Riccardo Contini and Cristiano Grottanelli; Studi biblici 148; Brescia: Paideia, 2005] 189).

68. Nineveh in Tobit is referred to repeatedly (18 times), albeit with defective geography; in 6:1, it is on the wrong side of the Tigris, probably in part as a means of keeping the geographical narrative elements distinct. It is unknown when the tradition of associating pagan Aḥiqar with Diaspora Judaism began, though the Persian period is a plausible guess.

69. If the origins of Tobit are rooted in Persian-period Babylonia, then encrypting Babylon as fallen Nineveh and the Achaemenid Persians as Medes was a prudential course of action.

longer version (S, Codex Sinaiticus) has Tobit's deathbed speech proclaim, "'My son, take your children and hurry off to Media, for I believe the word of God that Nahum spoke about Nineveh, that all these things will take place and overtake Assyria and Nineveh'" (NRSV). In the shorter Greek version (B, Codex Vaticanus), Media remains the goal, but the prophecy is Jonah's: "My son, take your sons; behold, I have grown old and am about to depart from this life. Go to Media, my son, for I fully believe what Jonah the prophet said about Nineveh, that it will be overthrown (RSV)." ⁷⁰

Judith

The Hellenistic Greek novella Judith celebrates the triumph of a pious Jewish woman over the emissary of "Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over Assyrian in the great city of Nineveh" (Jdt 1:1, RSV), a pastiche of the Mesopotamian superpowers that, centuries ago, defeated Israel and Judah and initiated the conditions of Diaspora Judaism. In a total war of vengeance, Holofernes, Nebuchadnezzar's general, is commissioned not only to conquer but also to eradicate local cults so that "all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and all their tongues and tribes should call upon him as god" (Jdt 3:8, RSV). The desperate postexilic people of Judea not only prepare for battle but imitate Jonah's penitent Ninevites by shrouding not only their persons but their cattle in sackcloth (4:10). Judith, the wise woman of Bethulia, famously decapitates/castrates Holofernes, routing the Assyrian host. Delivered from evil, the people celebrate their freedom before the Jerusalem temple with three months of sacrifice and votive dedications of the Assyrian spoils. The opposition between the "Great King, lord of the whole earth," Nebuchadnezzar, who dwells in Nineveh (Jdt 2:7, RSV), and the "God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth" (Jdt 9:12, RSV), who dwells in Jerusalem, is absolute, and unlike in Tobit, there is no hope for Gentile conversion.

The fabulous heroism of Judith is reminiscent of that of Inaros, though the Egyptian memories do not "require" that the Mesopotamian army be utterly destroyed. Jdt 1:2–4 renders "Median" Ecbatana even larger than Jonah's Nineveh, only to have Nebuchadnezzar destroy the city and slay its king,

70. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) 321. Mark Bredin contends that the B version represents a deliberate recasting of Tobit in the 2nd century C.E. to reflect the theological expectation that the Gentile nations will repent (13:11; 14:16), a motif notoriously absent in Nahum but central to Jonah. In the B version, it is particularly noteworthy that what Jonah speaks is not attributed to the Word of God ("The Significance of Jonah in Vaticanus [B] Tobit 14.4 and 8," in *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach* [ed. Mark Bredin; LSTS 55; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2006] 43–58). That Jonah's prophecy of doom against Nineveh "failed" caused consternation in the late *Lives of the Prophets*, in which Jonah says, apologetically, "So shall I remove my reproach, for I have spoken falsely in prophesying against Nineveh" (10:3).

demonstrating by simple mathematical one-upmanship the overmastering juggernaut of “Assyria” and its capital, Nineveh.

In conclusion, Akkadian, Greek, Aramaic, and Demotic sources “remember” Nineveh as the capital of an Assyria at the acme of its military success. The king of Nineveh occupies a continuum of literary rulership ranging from human parity with Nabopolassar (BM 21901) to a despot with ambitions to subjugate the entire world, snuffing out every rival cultus (book of Judith). With the notable exception of Papyrus Amherst 63, the rememberings outside the Hebrew Bible portray the fall of Nineveh and its kings as an activity that validates or rationalizes the survival of a rival kingdom or people, often cast as a dramatic exemplum of a reward-and-punishment pattern.

Where the cuneiform scribal tradition remained alive in the Mesopotamian temples where recopying documents comprised a formal component of the educational system, access to texts with detailed “knowledge” concerning the final Neo-Assyrian kings was possible, as witness the Seleucid pseudepigraphic apologetics in BM 55467 and CTMMA 2 no. 44. In Greece, Syria-Palestine and Egypt, by contrast, Sargonid Assyrian “facts” tended to be rooted in the retellings of the fall of Nineveh no deeper than royal and geographic names. Historical memories of the traumatic invasions and direct political meddlings in Egypt by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal affixed the retellings of Nineveh in the Tebtunis library tradition to the national hero Inaros or earlier Dynastic rulers, possibly as foils for imaginative Egyptian rebellion against a Persian interregnum. A comparison of Herodotus’s narration of the Greek invasion of Xerxes with the book of Jonah highlights the degree to which receptivity to supernatural warnings was itself key to understanding why a particular ruler brought ruin on an army or could save a city from divine wrath, even a city as “doomed” as Nineveh.

Post-Hebrew Bible Jewish memories of Nineveh selectively inhabit novels with a Judaized Aḥiqar and pious underdogs such as Tobit and Judith who foresee a post-Assyrian utopia or actually usher it into being, against all odds. It is by no means clear that any of these retellings, pagan or Jewish, harbor a self-reflexive critique against the authorial literati comparable to that of the book of Jonah.

*Excursus: Herodotus, Histories, as
Persian Empire Foil for Biblical Nineveh*

Herodotus’s *Histories*, a text roughly contemporary with biblical Jonah, is rife with supernatural communications in the guise of oracles, omens, prophecies, and dreams. Virtually all of these messages from the gods, named and unnamed, prove accurate, although their interpretation was subject to error and base manipulation. Herodotus’s Athenians spent much effort discussing

the dark oracles received from Delphi, ultimately acted on them, and won the war, even if their city and temples fell victim to the Persians (7.139–44). In heavy-handed contrast, the Persian king Xerxes and his second in command, Mardonius, receive numerous warnings from the gods foretelling their doomed expedition but either fail to divine the intended message or openly scoff at them (7.37, 57–58; 8.114; 9.36–38, 41–43). J. Mikalson notes “there is no indication that to ignore such omens was ‘impious,’ but it was foolish. And in the course of the Persian wars, it was only Persians, never Greeks, who ignored omens such as these that befell Xerxes.”⁷¹

Unlike the doomed Persians, the Ninevites of Jonah require but a single oracle to effect a total transformation of their wicked city. The king himself and his magnates set the trend. Although rebellious Jonah is in dialogue with YHWH, Yehud’s national deity, throughout the text, the polytheistic Ninevites repent on the strength of the knowledge that Jonah’s oracle comes from a generically named ‘god’ (אלהים). Even the pious Greeks in Herodotus’s *Histories* are vexed by the obscurity of many mantic oracles, but the Ninevites immediately “get it” and attempt to avert the infallible catastrophe of ignoring its warning.

Herodotus returns to the image of Xerxes’ “punishment” of the Hellespont as though it were a disobedient slave as the epitome of his ‘rash’ (ἄτασθαλίη) impiety (*Histories* 7.34–35, 8.109). The Ninevites also extend a traditionally human behavior, fasting and donning sackcloth, to the animal kingdom (Jonah 3:7–8), but the extension serves to democratize the city’s abasement before an angry God rather than highlight their incomprehension of the divine plan. If, as some claim, Herodotus and Aeschylus crystallized the literary figure of the doomed despot in their Xerxes, the “king of Nineveh” in Jonah flouts the role and fate of biblical Sennacherib through his swift and unerring response to divine displeasure, a message lost on none but the dimmest of the dim, Jonah.

Even in the curious matter of the Ninevites garbing themselves and their livestock in sackcloth, one can find a foil in Herodotus’s denigration of the Persian vanity in consumptive dress. The Persians adopt the livery of the Medes as an esthetic step up from their native customs (*Histories* 1.135), leading Aristagoras of Miletus to scoff at men who fight in trousers and turbans (5.49.3); at Plataea, it is the Persians’ sumptuous clothing, devoid of body armor, which made them most vulnerable to Greek military might (9.64). To a man, the Assyrians, “captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding on horses, all of them desirable young men” (Ezek 23:12, כַּנָּן), exchange their finery for mourning attire in Jonah 3. The trope of donning sackcloth and ashes to signify sorrow and abasement appears many places in the Hebrew Scriptures,

71. Jon D. Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) 43.

but nowhere is the image so arrestingly caricatured as in the portrait of an imperial capital whose inhabitants, from king to cow, don dull rags in the hope of averting deserved punishment.

“Babylon” Forever, or How to Divinize What You Want to Damn

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The Result: Babylon and “Babylon”

Religious texts, including the Bible, frequently add metaphorical meanings to simple information. In various texts comprising the Hebrew Bible, Babylon moves beyond its historical existence as the capital of the Neo-Babylonian Empire to serve as a symbol of world power, of self-reliant women, and of anti-Yahwistic morals. This process of assigning additional associations to the historical entity allowed it to be integrated into Judah’s (religious) system of thought as part of the process of understanding the destruction of Jerusalem and termination of the Kingdom of Judah and of coming to terms with a world-wide, hegemonic power named Babylon. Thus, Babylon was part of reality and history but also became part of imagination and theology.

“Babylon” became more powerful than Babylon and even replaced it in time. This is why in texts of the Hebrew Bible, one cannot find the name of Nabonidus, reference to any of Babylon’s famous buildings,¹ to any customs of the Babylonian people, or any allusion to Neo-Babylonian governmental organization. The texts originate primarily in the exilic or postexilic periods after the elimination of the Kingdom of Judah and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and even after the power of the historical Babylon declined.

The literary image of “Babylon” was and is so powerful that, in post-ancient times, no literary or historical source about Babylon exists without taking into account the Bible’s symbolic image of the city. For example, existing scholarly datings of biblical texts that mention Babylon work with a certain view of the evolution of Babylon’s image as having grown from a powerful historical place to a (pre)-apocalyptic, theological power. This movement is seen to parallel a move in the texts from a perspective of particularity to universality: for example, because in Isaiah 13 the end of the world (vv. 9–13) is embedded in the local destruction of a city (vv. 2–8, 14–22), most exegetes date the two

1. It should be noted that many consider Etemenanki to underlie the Tower of “Babel” in Gen 11:1–9.

parts to different times. The destruction of the city is assumed to be a preexilic text dealing with the city of Babylon in particular, while the preapocalyptic text about the day of YHWH, which will have a global impact, is thought to be postexilic. This phenomenon can be found for nearly every other text dealing with the historical or literary Babylon as well.

In the following pages, I will work out details of how various texts in the Hebrew Bible, in effect, divinized “Babylon” in their attempt to damn it. At the same time, it became an integral part of Judean theology in the Hebrew Bible. This was possible because of certain literary techniques that, in part, were unique to ancient Levantine texts, though I will limit this study to the following biblical texts: Gen 11:1–9; Isa 13:1–14:27; 21:1–9, 47; Jeremiah 25, 50–51; and Psalm 137.

The Range:

Components of “Babylon’s” Image in the Hebrew Bible

No other city except Jerusalem is mentioned as often as Babylon in the Hebrew Bible. Babylon’s biblical image is shaped both by fascination and scornful fear. In general, the authors of biblical prophetic oracles to take up known motifs again and again, adapt them to new contexts, and thus change them. Prophetic texts construct a specific religious symbolic system and even a specific reality. The existence of metaphors in prophetic texts doubles the possible number of layers of meaning because many words can be used and understood literally and metaphorically. This leads to a certain mystique associated with any prophetic issue; here, I will trace some traits of the “Babylonian” mystique.

Babylonam delendam esse

The question shared by all biblical texts mentioning Babylon is: “How can it be destroyed?” In the Hebrew Bible, Babylon’s collapse is conceived of in many—or all—imaginable ways: as a casualty of the day of YHWH at the end of the world (Isaiah 13/21),² as the consequence of prior action (Isaiah 14), as sexual violence against a woman and chaos in the safety system (Isaiah 47), as disorder due to drunkenness that leads to a world war (Jeremiah 25), as a result of retaliation (Psalm 137), and by dispersion (Genesis 11).³ Jeremiah 50–51

2. In my essay about Isaiah 21, I argue that the situation the prophet envisions is exactly what is described in Isaiah 13. Key to this understanding is the occurrence of the image of labor pains in both visions: Isaiah is abducted into “Babylon” as it comes under enemy attack, where he faces his own death while seeing YHWH standing as a warrior in front of the city (Ulrike Sals, “Die Wehen des Propheten. Visionswahrnehmung in Jes 21,1–10.11–12 als Schlüssel zum Textverständnis,” in *Wie schön sind deine Zelte, Jakob!*“ *Zur Ästhetik des Alten Testaments* [ed. Alexandra Grund; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003] 44–71).

3. Gen 11:1–9 tells the story of Babylon’s ruin in the process of its construction.

represents a climax in quantity and quality, containing a synthesis of all the concepts of its downfall.

The executors and the execution of the destruction, the aggressors and their aggression, respectively, are presented as polymorphic. Their common denominator is the instrumentalization of persons as divine tools (Isa 13:2–5; Jer 50:25; 51:2, 11, 20–24), which parallels the personification of weapons such as arrows (Jer 50:9, 14) and swords (Jer 25:16, 27, 29; 50:35–37, 16; Isa 13:15; see also Ezek 21:23–32).⁴ Enemies eat their outgunned adversary (Jer 50:7, 10, 17; 51:34), arrows drink the spilled blood, and birds feast on the corpses of the fallen (Jer 25:33).

The main key to Babylon's dominating position in the cultural memory of cities, civilization, "bad" women, and other ciphers it stands for is the intertextual web created about it by weaving together characteristics and motifs and linking them through repetition across various texts. This repetition of the same lexemes and the overlapping of images trigger a paralleling of the accounted-for or prophesied events. At the same time, they offer verbal hooks that can be used to harmonize these parallel texts and allow for the inscribing of one onto the other. Repetitions underline Babylon's fate and strengthen the "veracity" of its various conceptualizations and assigned symbolic values for the readers and hearers of these texts.

There are several words, motifs, and propositions that appear frequently. For example, the elevation of the war-standard appears in connection with war (Jer 50:2; 51:12, 27; Isa 13:2), as does 'devastation' (שַׁמְמָה, Jer 50:13; 51:26, 62; Jer 25:12; שָׁמָה, Jer 50:3, 23; 51:29, 37, 41, 43; Isa 13:9) or the occupation of formerly inhabited spaces by desert animals (Isa 13:21–22, 14:23, Jer 50:38, 51:37). The 'Day of YHWH' (יִום יְהוָה) is one possibility of doom (Isa 13:6, 9, 13 and Jer 51:2). Then, there is revenge (Isa 47:3; Jer 50:15, 28; 51:6, 11, 36) and the ban placed on Babylon and its army (חֹרֵם, Jer 50:21, 26; 51:3), just as the Chaldeans had banned Jerusalem/Judah (Jer 25:9).

The verb שָׁחַת 'to spoil' is exceedingly important in texts about Babylon (Isa 14:20; Jer 51:1, 11, 20, 25). It is a technical term used particularly in the book of Jeremiah for YHWH's acts of obliteration. Also important is the lexical field שָׁדַד/שָׁדַד/שָׁדַד—'to devastate' (Isa 13:6; 21:2; Jer 25:36; 51:48, 53, 55, 56; Ps 137:8), which offers opportunities for wordplay, including one involving YHWH and the god Shaddai.⁵ YHWH's title as Lord of Hosts gets considerable

4. The sword's autonomy in war, including its having a mouth (פֶּה), is common and, therefore, formulaic in Hebrew and other and Semitic languages. But any dead metaphor can be revitalized, as seen in many of the texts in the Hebrew Bible.

5. Graham S. Ogden assumes that שָׁדַד points to Edom more than to Babylon because it appears in Obadiah, Jer 49:7–22, and Psalm 137 ("Prophetic Oracles against Foreign Nations and Psalms of Communal Lament: The Relationship of Psalm 137 to Jeremiah 49:7–22 and Obadiah," *JSOT* 24 [1982] 89–97 [pp. 92–93]). Indeed,

military stress but also serves as a sign of power (Isa 13:4, 13; 14:22, 23, 24, 27; 21:10; 47:4; Jer 25:8, 27, 28, 29, 32; 50:18, 25, 31, 33, 34; 51:5, 14, 19, 33, 57, 58). Babylon's foes are stirred up (Isa 13:17; Jer 50:9, 41; 51:1, 11), as is the storm (Jer 25:32) and She'ol (Isa 14:9).

One can literally see cultural memory at work by following the ways in which motifs are amplified in one instance and condensed in another. The best example is drunkenness as a key to downfall. In Jer 25:15–26, Jeremiah gives YHWH's cup of wrath to every group of people in the world—and the drink is to cause a world war. The king of שׁוֹבַל/Babel will drink last and then be killed; before that, however, he will subdue all who drank before him for 70 years. The cup of wrath appears in a condensed form in Jer 51:7. Whereas in Jeremiah 25 the king of Babylon is the last to drink from the cup, in Jer 51:7 Babylon is the cup. The prophecy of Jeremiah 25 became a part of "Babylon's" identity. Together with Hab 2:15–17, Jeremiah 25 and 51:7 are developed even further in the New Testament in Revelation 17. The drunken king of Babylon in Jeremiah 25 that becomes Babylon as a cup in Jer 51:7 ends up as the woman Babylon with a cup in Revelation 17.

Lexemes, motifs and propositions are repeated as well as varied. The variation of the same images in combination with their reduplication fashions the image of Babylon's downfall both sequentially and concomitantly. This multifaceted description achieves a multidimensional, warranted truth.

In addition, to be sure, there is the continuous turn of fortune: in some texts Babylon is the foe from the north (probable for Jeremiah 4–6⁶ and implied in Zech 2:10 and 6:8⁷) or cooperates with him (Jer 25:9), but in Jer 50:39, 41; 51:48, it now receives the foe from the north. Just as Babylonian envoys come "from a distant land" to Hezekiah's court (Isa 39:3), so will Babylon's destroyers come "from a distant land" (Isa 13:5). In Deutero-Isaiah, this motif is turned on its head; Israel's sons and daughters will turn "home" from distant countries and from the edge of the earth (Isa 43:6–7, 49:12).

Babylon is or represents different political or religious systems of power or authority in different texts: communism (Genesis 11), tyranny (Isaiah 14), a site of exile (Psalm 137), a foreign ally or foe (Isaiah 21), a military power (Jeremiah 25), knowledge (Isaiah 47), a city (Isaiah 13), and finally, a kingdom, city, region, monster, and religion (Jeremiah 50–51). This means in biblical memory, Babylon could be any or every form of society or government.

prophecies about Babylon and Edom are similar; both names appear in Psalm 137, but שׁוֹבַל is only used in connection with Babylon explicitly.

6. Rainer Albertz, "Jer 2–6 und die Frühzeitverkündigung Jeremias," ZAW 94 (1982) 20–47.

7. Christian Jeremias, *Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja: Untersuchungen zu ihrer Stellung im Zusammenhang der Visionsberichte im Alten Testament und zu ihrem Bildmaterial* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977) 27.

These multifaceted concepts and images of Babylon on the verge of its destruction elicit an impression of its indestructibility, which might be informed by its historical endurance in spite of its capture by Cyrus in 539 B.C.E. and by Alexander in 323 B.C.E., who decided to make it his new capital.

Babylon Is Everything

Babylon appears in nearly every genre of the Hebrew Bible. It features in a psalm (Psalm 137), a myth/etiology (Gen 11:1–9), a note (Gen 10:8–10) in the primeval history, a narrative in the book of Kings (2 Kings 25 // Jeremiah 52), a prose story in Isaiah (Isaiah 39), a *קִינָה*-lament (over King Babel [Isaiah 14] and Queen Babel [Isaiah 47]), a *משל* ‘pithy saying’ (Isaiah 14), a performative ritual similar to a sign act (Jeremiah 25), and a sampler of all prophecies of doom about every civilization now synthesized in Babel (Jeremiah 50–51). The plots told in the books of Esther and Daniel take place in reimagined Babylon.⁸ Additionally, there are many short notes about Babylon all over the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Zech 2:11). All these different voices pronounce that the multidimensional “Babylon” will fall.

Babylon’s downfall is accompanied or provoked by apocalyptic phenomena in the cosmos and in nature. These include the underworld, heaven (Isa 13:13, 14:9; Jer 50:43), flood waves (Jer 51:42), drought (Jer 50:38, 51:36), earthquakes (Jer 50:46, 51:29; Isa 13:13), the disappearance of stars (Isa 13:9), volcanic eruption/fire from heaven (Jer 50:32; 51:25, 32, 58; 25:32; Isa 47:14), and wind (Jer 51:1, 25:32; Isa 21:1). YHWH will destroy the multidimensional city when he destroys the whole earth by bringing his agents of destruction from the ends of the heavens (Isa 13:5; a similar idea is found in Jer 50:26); at its end, the whole of creation will rejoice (Jer 51:48).

Ironically, the mythic “Babylon” has been created by Babylon itself: in the prologue of the *Codex Hammurapi* we are told that Babylon’s kingship lasts forever, its foundation is as solid as heaven and earth. It was named by An and Enlil, they made it famous in all the four regions in the world. The Babylonian god Marduk became creator of the world in the *Enuma Elish*.⁹ “Babylon” is seen as the world’s navel, whose buildings connect heaven and earth.¹⁰

8. Although or because the book of Ezekiel is written in Babylon, there is no vision about the city in the entire book.

9. Rykle Borger, “Der Codex Hammurapi,” in *Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden. Historisch-chronologische Texte* (ed. Rykle Borger et al.; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1982) 39–80 (p. 40).

10. Andrew R. George, “‘Bond of the Lands’: Babylon, the Cosmic Capital,” in *Die orientalische Stadt: Kontinuität, Wandel, Bruch* (ed. Gernot Wilhelm; Saarbrücken: SDV, 1997) 125–45; Stefan Maul, “Die altorientalische Hauptstadt: Abbild und Nabel der Welt,” in *Die orientalische Stadt: Kontinuität, Wandel, Bruch* (ed. Gernot Wilhelm; Saarbrücken: SDV, 1997) 109–24.

In the Hebrew Bible, this concept of Babylon is adapted and mocked; everything seems meant to be taken literally *and* metaphorically: Not only the Babylonian (= Mesopotamian) region itself but also the entire earth stands under Babylonian rule. This can be seen by looking at the lexeme אֲרֶץ (arē) in texts about Babylon. In Genesis 11 the whole ‘political world’ (אֲרֶץ) settles in one valley: in Shinar. In Isaiah 13, a city’s conquest encloses ‘the world’s’ destruction. The request by “King Babylon” to rule even heaven will be denied in the end (Isaiah 14); instead, “Queen Babylon” rules heaven (Isa 47:13). The prophecy about “the wilderness of the sea” in Isa 21:1 identifies the wilderness or sea with Babylon (Isa 21:9). Its destruction is simultaneously a local and a universal incident. “Babylon” is always more than Babylon and in most instances, incorporates globalization in every sense of its meaning and its realization: “Babylon” is everywhere.¹¹

Power and Gender

“Babylon” is far more than a site; it has many denotations, identities, and connotations. It is a city, or a region and/or its inhabitants in Genesis 11, Isaiah 13, 14:22–23, Jeremiah 25, and Ps 137:1, and an entity of unknown identity in Isa 21:1–10. It is a woman in Isaiah 47 and Ps 137:7–9 and a man in Isa 14:4b–21 and Jer 50:31–32. In Jeremiah 50–51, we find a synthesis of many identities, qualifications, titles and gender. Despite “Babylon’s” being symbolized as both female and male in nearly an equal number of biblical verses, the female identity and connotations dominate in its literary reception. They are intensified by Jerusalem’s female metaphorization and the reception of the two personified cities in deuterocanonical, apocryphal, and New Testament texts, especially the Apocalypse of John. So, one can conclude, “Babylon” has more than one gender—just like YHWH.

In the Hebrew Bible, “Babylon’s” kings are the most powerful of all. Over the centuries, the biblical figure of Nebuchadnezzar has grown more and more into a literary and mythical figure paralleling the multidimensional Babylon itself. His power is the power of the first human being (Jer 27:6). He is depicted as especially cruel as well as a divine tool used to subdue the whole world (Jer 25:9, 27:6, 43:10). In Jer 50:43, the king of Babylon experiences anguish as though he has gone into labor and can only witness Babylon’s fall passively. He has been like a monster and like a lion seizing Zion and gnawing its/her bones left over by Assur (Jer 51:34f). In Dan 4:27 (LXX 4:29), Nebuchadnezzar goes mad while gazing on “Babylon,” his famous and beautiful capital.

11. This is why in postexilic times, Jerusalem is understood as “Babylon’s” (religious) counterpart and, consequently, is imagined as the center of the world (Rainer Kessler, “Mirjam und die Prophetie der Perserzeit,” in *Gott an den Rändern: Sozialgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Bibel, Festschrift Willy Schottroff* [ed. Ulrike Bail and Renate Jost; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1996] 64–72).

In Isa 14:4b–21, “Babylon” is personified as a king and in Isaiah 47 as a queen.¹² Here, the same picture can be seen: once the most powerful king (Isaiah 14), he was seduced by *hubris*, wanting to be like God. This led to his decisive downfall: the prince of dawn (lat. *luciferus*) was thrown down to earth (Isa 14:12–15). This is how Lucifer was born. Consequently, in reception history, the antichrist is born in “Babylon,”¹³ and for the Church Father Augustine, the devil appears in the image of the prince of “Babylon.”¹⁴

In Isaiah 47, “Babylon” is an almighty queen destined to sit on the throne forever. However, this destiny will be overturned when YHWH forces her to be a slave, sharing Jerusalem’s fate. Apart from Jerusalem and “Babylon” changing places, the personification of “Babylon” as a woman in this chapter has played a decisive role in the city’s reception history. Instead of being remembered primarily for its overpowering knowledge and military might and its use of technology and resources, thanks to Isaiah 47, the highly civilized city is memorialized as a woman with a biography; for biblical readers, this is the true image of “Babylon.” The city, which was “conquered” by the Persians without harm, is mortal, that means vincible—and hence, is cast in an immortal image for the indefinite future.

Jeremiah 50–51 serves as a summarizing synthesis of “Babylon”—and all texts that use the theme of the city-as-woman-to-be-punished. It transcribes the chaos of war. Here, one can find neither a continuous personification as queen (as in Isaiah 47) or as king (as in Isaiah 14) nor a continuous description of a city under enemy attack (as in Isaiah 13) but instead a wide range of images, metaphors, attributions, and titles. One effect is that the dual meaning of city/region/topos and women/queen to be treated violently resonate latently. They enable and sometimes even force us to read both meanings and to transfer gender images to fields that genuinely have no gendered meaning.

Finally, it must be noted that war unites the collage of images in Jeremiah 50–51. City, region, inhabitants, and personified king, queen, and woman are superimposed in images, fates, and grammar; a single lexeme embodies the multiple roles of “Babylon” for both those addressed and those speaking: devastation. Everything will be devastated, so that devastation serves as “Babylon’s” main characteristic. “Babylon” literally is a collective term. Gender is deconstructed by its hypostatizing.¹⁵

12. Ulrike Sals, *Die Biographie der “Hure Babylon”: Studien zur Intertextualität der Babylon-Texte in der Bibel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 262–67, 318–19.

13. Adso of Montier-en-Der wrote in his very influential Scripture, *De ortu et tempore Antichristi*, that the antichrist was a son of the devil and a Jewish woman of the tribe of Dan; see Ulrike Sals and Martin Przybiski, “Babylon: Die ewige Stadt,” in *Burgen, Länder, Orte* (ed. Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich; Konstanz: UVK, 2008) 75–89.

14. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11,15.

15. For a detailed reasoning, see my *Biographie der “Hure Babylon,”* 416–31.

Site as Topos

Babylon's historical power in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C.E. and its symbolic meaning are mirrored in the structure of the books of Isaiah, Genesis, and Jeremiah. In First Isaiah (1–39), Isaiah 13 is the first of 10 Oracles against the Foreign Nations (Isaiah 13–23), Isa 21:1–10 is the fifth. Thus, “Babylon” serves as the head of two subcycles in Isaiah 13–23; in the first, YHWH announces its destruction, and in the second, the accomplishment of that destruction leads off the second group of five oracles.¹⁶ In Deutero-Isaiah (chaps. 40–55), on the other hand, Isaiah 47 constitutes the monolithic textual center, while passages mentioning Jerusalem are notes, really, short and dispersed all over the book. The composition of Second Isaiah mirrors exilic reality, with Babylon at the climax of its power and Jerusalem lying in ruins, its stones scattered everywhere.

In the primeval history that opens the book of Genesis (chaps. 1–11), the story of the tower of “Babylon” (Gen 11:1–9) introduces the end of the entire eleven chapters, as well as the end and climax of chaps. 9–11. In the book of Jeremiah, “Babylon” is the subject of the text that forms the exact middle of the MT version of the book (chap. 25), of the penultimate two chapters (chaps. 50–51), and features in the final sentence of the book (52:34). Thus, “Babylon” builds the axes of three biblical books, occupying the beginning, end, and center of a composition: site becomes topos.

In contrast, a strategy used to deal with the Exile in Babylonia in biblical texts is silence: the gap between Isaiah 39 and 40, between First Isaiah, set in the monarchic period, and Deutero-Isaiah, set in the early days of Cyrus, king of Persia, is widely known. But the same is true for the book of the Twelve Minor Prophets. Between the books of Zephaniah and Haggai, one can find a deep break between the monarchic era associated with Zephaniah and the Persian period associated with Haggai.¹⁷

Babylon as an Admired Civilization

There are details that indicate that “Babylon” is not seen as the most evil power by all Judeans. In the Greek version of the book of Jeremiah, “Babylon” is less evil and (therefore) less important. Whereas in the Hebrew versions, “Babylon” occupies the final position, the climax focusing on the addressees of the deadly wine (Jeremiah 25), in the Greek version, “Babylon” is in the third position, Moab in the last. Also, in the texts themselves “Babylon” plays a different role: in the Greek versions of 25:9, 11, 12, references to “Babylon”

16. Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* (Freiburg: Herder, 1998). For another discussion of these oracles in this volume, see pp. 21–40, Stéphanie Anthonioz, “Cities of Glory and Cities of Pride: Concepts, Gender, and Images of Cities in Mesopotamia and the Bible.”

17. Aaron Scharf, “Zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Zwölfprophetenbuchs,” *VF* 43 (1998) 13–33 (p. 20).

and “king of Babylon” are missing and v. 1 is not dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. “Babylon’s” position in Greek versions of Jeremiah is, all in all, less central than in the Hebrew versions.

But even in the MT version of the book of Jeremiah, Babylon is not as evil as Jeremiah 50–51 insinuate. “Babylon’s” status as the future homeland for Judeans in Jer 29:4–7 regards “Babylon” positively. It is quite a clear statement about living in “Babylon.” “Babel” is even part of the personal names of those whose parents were forcefully resettled in Babylonia; the best known is Zerubbabel. Although the exact meaning of the name is still under debate,¹⁸ most exegetes vote for ‘offspring of Babel’. The individual bearing this name in Haggai 2, Zechariah 4, and Ezra 5 is the grandson of the former Judahite king, Jeconiah. It is no wonder, then, that the prophets Zechariah and Haggai wanted to see a Davidide as the head of the government (Haggai 2, Zechariah 4). But the attempt to get a man with a name that means ‘offspring of Babel’ into such a leading position was perhaps overly ambitious, although it is unknown why Zerubbabel did not succeed. Regardless, authors and traditions/parties who had a positive opinion of Babel have no loud voice in the biblical canon.

Even so, a fascination with Babylonian civilization can be seen to underlie the doom texts. Within descriptions of the anticipated brutal destruction of “Babylon,” it is common to mention the city’s cultural achievements. These include architecture in general and ancient urban development in particular (Gen 11:1–9; Jer 51:53, 58), military prowess (Jer 5:15–17), medicine, (Jer 51:8–9), and astronomy (Isa 47:10–15). While all these items are judged negatively, they betray a begrudging, underlying admiration. “Babylon” stands for prosperity in every sense; as a mighty and beautiful city, it is loved by its king (Dan 4:27[29]). In Gen 11:4, Isa 14:13, and Jer 51:53, even a (failed) preeminence, an “ascension to or toward heaven,” becomes part of “Babylon’s” character.

Open admiration is voiced in Jer 5:15–17: Judah will be destroyed by a forceful army of a nation whose achievements in military and cultural areas are incomparable. The horror of the impending downfall of Jerusalem is intensified by mentioning “Babylon’s” present splendor, which always is contrasted with Jerusalem’s imminent demise: the golden cup (Jer 51:7) and great treasures (Jer 51:13). In addition, “Babylon” is admiringly imperial, ruling over kingdoms (Isa 47:5), making them quake (Isa 14:16), the glory of kingdoms (Isa 13:19), and a city for a king (Dan 4:27[29]). And yet, Babylon’s implied splendor increases the intensity of its devastation and adds an odor of decadence to its image. What is more, this composite image does not show “Babylon’s” superiority, but YHWH’s endless power.

18. Lutz Bauer, *Zeit des Zweiten Tempels: Zeit der Gerechtigkeit. Zur sozio-ökonomischen Konzeption im Haggai—Sacharja—Maleachi-Korpus* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992) 246. He concludes from the onomastic discussions that Zerubbabel was not a historical person but a corporate personality.

Other Capitals, Kingdoms, and "Babylon"

What is true for intertextualities concerning texts about Babylon is even truer for other foreign cities in their communicative relationship to "Babylon": they interweave. Whereas "Babylon" succeeds Assur in a special way, it shares with "Edom," "Tyre," and "Sodom" most of the same vocabulary of prophetic doom. However, because the powerful "Babylon" outlived them in historical and literary regards, these literary motifs became quintessential "Babylonian" attributes.

Unlike the situation with the geographical region and political unit called Babylon, whose capital was Babylon, one can easily distinguish between Assur and its capital Nineveh. Assur is grammatically male in gender while Nineveh is female; is this why Assur has not served as such a detailed and dominant metaphor? In Proto-Isaiah "Babylon" succeeds and, therefore, resembles Assur; both function as YHWH's instrument (Isa 10:5, 15 and Jer 51:7; Isa 47:6), both show *hubris* and both act brutally against Judah and against all other nations. In Jeremiah, Assur, Nineveh, and their king remain underdeveloped, flat characters (Assur as region, Jer 2:18, 36) in contrast to "Babylon" and Nebuchadnezzar, who play central roles in the whole book.

Just as Babylonia and Babylon succeeded Assur and Nineveh as the world empire and its main capital, so can the same succession be traced in the literary history of biblical texts; several are thought to have been written initially against Assur and later edited to go against "Babylon." C. Uehlinger has argued persuasively that the legend of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1–9, one of the most famous biblical texts, was originally a story meant to allude to Sargon II's unfinished new Assyrian capital at Dur Sharrukin.¹⁹ In Genesis, both the city and a tower are being built but are left unfinished when God introduces multiple languages among the cooperating groups of people in place of a shared, common language. Uehlinger has shown how this text interacts with Assyrian propagandistic texts concerning the building of Dur Sarukkin and Sargon's intention to unite all people in his empire by forcing them to adopt a single language and ideology. Sargon died without finishing this project. Whereas the first version of the text found in Gen 11:1–9 would likely date, then, to around 700 B.C.E., intending to caricature contemporary Assyrian rhetoric and its king Sargon. Uehlinger argues it was in the second of four stages of revision that this text came to be about "Babylon." A scribe or scribal group living in either the Exilic or early Postexilic Period inserted Gen 11:3 and 9* so that the story would now allude to the building projects of Nebuchadnezzar II and provide a mocking etiology for Babylon.²⁰

19. Christoph Uehlinger, *Weltreich und "eine Rede": Eine neue Deutung der sogenannten Turmbauergeschichte (Gen 11,1–9)* (Fribourg: Fribourg University Press / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990).

20. Ibid., 546–58.

In Isaiah 13 there are several images used of “Babylon” that characterize Assur in the preceding chaps. 1–12. This has convinced S. Erlandsson that an earlier stage of Isaiah 13 treated the downfall of Assur rather than Babylon.²¹ Perhaps as further support for his proposal, it is noteworthy that in the ensuing chap. 14, the dead king of “Babylon” is portrayed as an Assyrian king.²² In addition, at the end of this textual complex, the focus suddenly returns to Assur (14:24)—without really ending the preceding text about “Babylon.” This textual succession is only possible if Assur and “Babylon” are seen to share enough commonalities that Babylon could be substituted for its historical and literarily constructed predecessor in an editorial process of updating to make the texts relevant for a subsequent audience.

The kings of Assur and “Babylon” are also seen to be comparable. Particularly in Jeremiah, their behavior reenacts the historical inheritance of worldwide hegemony by military supremacy. Both kings are lions that gorge and gnaw Israel after one another (Jer 50:17), but now they will be haunted—after one another (Jer 50:18). Like the two successor empires, the kings of Assur and Babylon are treated as though they are interchangeable in certain biblical texts.

Whereas Assur and Babylon succeed one other as empires, the treatment of Nineveh, Assur’s capital, parallels that of Babylon: it, too, becomes ‘a devastation’, a desert (שׁממה, Zeph 2:13; Jer 25:2, 50:13, 51:26; 62). Wild animals enter both cities (Zeph 2:14–15; Isa 13:20–22; 14:23; Jer 50:39; 51:37) that once sat securely (Zeph 2:15; Isa 47:8). Just as Nineveh becomes an object of hissing (Zeph 2:15), so too does Babylon (Jer 50:13, 51:37).²³ Both Nineveh (Nah 3:4) and Babylon (Isa 47:12) are personified as women and accused of witchcraft (כַּשָּׁף). The one is called ‘mistress of witchcraft’ (בַּעֲלַת כַּשָּׁפִים, Nah 3:4) and the other ‘Lady of kingdoms’ (גְּבִירַת מַמְלָכוֹת, Isa 47:5). Both are publicly humiliated by the exposure of their pudenda in broad daylight in communal space (Nah 3:5, Isa 47:3).²⁴ Their infants are to be smashed to pieces (Nah 3:10, Ps 137:9); Nineveh gets drunk (Nah 3:11), just like Babylon’s elites (Isa 47:15; Jer 25:26b, 51:57) and inhabitants (Jer 51:39). Nineveh’s people become women (Nah 3:13), as do “Babylon’s” warriors (Jer 51:30, 32, 56). Fire devours (Nah 3:15) and burns (Jer 50:32, 51:25; Isa 47:14) both, and the sword kills both (Nah 3:15; Jer 50:16, 35–37; 51:50; Isa 13:15). Nineveh has many ‘traders’ (רַכְלֵי, Nah 3:16) and “Babylon” ‘trades’ (סֹחֵר, Isa 47:15).²⁵

21. Seth Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon: A Study of Isaiah 13:2–14:23* (Lund: Gleerup, 1970) 160–67.

22. Sals, *Biographie der “Hure Babylon,”* 264.

23. Jerusalem can be added to the list of cities that become objects of hissing (Jer 25:9, 18).

24. Sals, *Biographie der “Hure Babylon,”* 303, 312–13, 454–55.

25. For more examples and for queen Jezebel as another comparable figure, see my “Das literarisierte Königspaar Ahab und Jezebel im Geflecht von Traditionen und

Moving on to other kingdoms, Edom/Dumah and “Babylon” are equated in Ps 137:7–8 because of their cruelty in war. They follow each other in a sequence of destruction, real or anticipated, in Isa 21:1–10 and 21:11–12. Jer 49:7–22 is a prophecy against Edom, similar to the extended one comprising the book of Obadiah. It contains a lot of motifs that can also be found in texts against “Babylon” (Jeremiah 50–51). Parallels are drawn between the two in the manner in which they will be destroyed and the after-effects (Isaiah 13 and 34). According to J. Lust, Isaiah 34 was composed to connect Isaiah 13 and 21. “Babylon,” Edom, and Zion were symbols for the deteriorated humanity in general, and all three texts contain hints at Sodom and its destruction.²⁶ For O. H. Steck, the conceptual function of Isaiah 13 and 34 is to enclose the Oracles against the Foreign Nations; therefore, it is not coincidental that of all the nations named in these oracles, “Babylon” and Edom are highlighted.²⁷

There are further relationships between “Babylon” and Tyre concerning trade and “Babylon” and Sodom concerning bad morals. Persia and Greece have hardly any symbolic meaning in the Hebrew Bible,²⁸ and in addition, they have no negative image in Judean biblical literature. Thus, they do not fit into this binary system of bad, feminine foreign nations.

Oracles against Foreign Nations in general share a basic theme and so are interdependent. This circumstance enables the sharing of motifs, threats, and ideas. But interestingly, in terms of cultural memory, these inter-textualities work primarily in one direction: “Babylon” resembles “Edom,” “Tyre,” and “Sodom,” but “Edom,” “Tyre,” and “Sodom” do not resemble “Babylon.” Their images do not gain new aspects to their profiles by the shared horizons, motifs, and details; instead, “Babylon’s” does. That is to say, the destruction of any city in the Hebrew Bible becomes “babylomorphic.” There are only a few, if any, characteristics that other cities share and “Babylon” does not. Instead, nearly every attribute of a foreign city can also be found connected to “Babylon”—this is one reason why “Babylon” is a factor in Jewish-Christian cultural memory while other ancient cities and countries are of lesser significance.

Jerusalem/Judah and “Babylon”

In the Hebrew Bible, Jerusalem and Babylon are not polar opposites; daughter Jerusalem is part of a patriarchal societal system, while “Babylon”

Beziehungen,” in *Paare in antiken religiösen Texten und Bildern: Symbole für Geschlechterrollen damals und heute* (ed. Elmar Klinger, Stephanie Böhm, and Thomas Franz; Würzburg: Echter 2003) 133–62 (pp. 137–42).

26. Johan Lust, “Isaiah 34 and the Herem in The Book of Isaiah,” *Le livre d’Isaïe: Les oracles et leurs relectures. Unité et complexité de l’ouvrage* (ed. Jacques Vermeylen; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989) 275–86 (pp. 284–85).

27. Odil H. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr: Jesaja 35 und 36 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und Zweiten Jesaja* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1985) 56; Lust, “Isaiah 34,” 284.

28. This is different from Cyrus.

stands for another system. And yet, in some prophetic texts there are parallels between Jerusalem and Babylon, particularly concerning their fate: Jerusalem's replacing of Babylon step by step in Deutero-Isaiah is obvious. The author of Joel 2:1–11 applies Babylon's downfall (Isaiah 13) to Jerusalem.²⁹ Similarly, Zech 14:1–10, which focuses on Jerusalem, adapts the oracle against Babylon in Isaiah 13.³⁰ The depiction of Jerusalem in Zeph 1:18 and 2:2 also parallel parts of Isaiah 13. Both involve the idea of the Day of YHWH³¹ and have to face mocking passers-by (Jer 19:8, Jerusalem; Jer 50:13, Babylon). Both have wounds that cannot be healed (Jer 8:22; 14:17, Jerusalem; Jer 51:8–9, Babylon). The two even share the same pronouncement of doom (Jer 6:22–24, Jerusalem; Jer 50:41–43, Babylon).³²

Some motifs even construct a relationship between both figures: “Babylon” is the golden cup in YHWH's hand (Jer 51:7)—and Jerusalem drank from it (Isa 51:17). Israel has been threshed (Isa 21:10); this is to happen also to “Babylon” (Jer 51:33)³³—and daughter Zion will do the threshing (Mic 4:13). Jerusalem becomes “Babylon” and “Babylon” becomes Jerusalem.

However, it is not an antagonism of two but of three: YHWH himself stresses the three-way relationship. Babylon's destruction is a result of his love for his people (Jer 51:24; 50:20, 28–29). He is Israel's shepherd, Israel is his flock (Jer 50:4–8), and he will punish the king of Babylon and his land as he punished the king of Assyria before him. Both were lions “gnawing on the bones” of his sheep (Jer 50:17–20) But YHWH also is a lion (Jer 50:44a), and as owner of the flock, he will restore it to its pasture (Jer 50:19) and appoint its shepherds (Jer 50:44b). YHWH is Zion's redeemer (Jer 50:33–34) and revenger (Jer 51:36). The most impressive text in this regard for me is Jer 50:4–6, which fulfills Jer 3:18 and 31:9. Israel and Judah together return, weeping, to the Promised Land.

By recalling the overpowering “Babylonian” army, the exile, and the hardships after the return to the Promised Land, Israel finds and expresses its identity. The effort to motivate Judeans to return “home” is carried out by defaming “Babylon” and conducting a horrendous war against it. Thus, “Babylon” becomes crucial in verbalizing what “Israel” means. In Babylon's destruction,

29. Hans W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2. Joel und Amos* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) 55–56; E. Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Verbindung von Prophetenbüchern in babylonischer und persischer Zeit* (Freiburg: Freiburg University Press, 1997) 277–96.

30. Douglas A. Witt, “The Houses Plundered, the Women Raped: The Use of Isaiah 13 in Zechariah 14:1–11,” *Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies* 11 (1991) 66–74.

31. Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 510.

32. For more evidence, see my *Biographie der “Hure Babylon,”* 456–59.

33. The LXX has “houses of the king” instead of “daughter Babel.”

YHWH and Israel find the common ground of their love again. Babylon's destruction has to be preserved and remembered for the perpetual newly found love between Israel and its God.

YHWH and "Babylon"

In the texts one can see two trends concerning "Babylon's" theological function. The first is to declare "Babylon" a divine tool (Jer 25:8–11, 15–28; 50:23; 51:7; 51:20–23; Ezekiel 24; Mic 4:10), similar to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:9, 27:6, 43:10), which YHWH uses to punish Israel. The second is to see "Babylon" as YHWH's adversary (Jer 25:12; 50; 51:24–64; Isa 14:5–23; 47:6) because of its atrocity in war and the cruelty with which it treated its captives.

The last crucial feature I want to address is the mimetic rivalry between YHWH and "Babylon." Both YHWH and Nebuchadnezzar are lions (Jer 50:17, 44); both have treasures (Jer 50:25, 51:13). "Babylon" is strong and holds its defeated captive (Jer 50:33), but YHWH is stronger and destroys "Babylon" (Jer 50:34). "Babylon" rules heaven and earth, but YHWH rules the realm of "inner space" between heaven and earth (Zech 5:9) and outer space as well (Isa 13:5). "Babylon" can climb up to heaven, but YHWH will defeat it (Genesis 11, Isa 14:12–15, Jer 51:53) because he created heaven (Jer 51:15, 16). YHWH even darkens heaven so that "Babylon" loses its ability to make astronomical calculations (Isa 13:13). But a side-effect is that with this action, YHWH confirms that "Babylonian" astronomical calculations were correct. The deity has to use his superior power to defeat "Babylon." Ironically, by remembering "Babylon" as the most evil nation possible to emphasize YHWH's power and victory (Isaiah 14 and 47; Gen 11:6), "Babylon's" power grows and finally is comparable to YHWH's.

The Reason:

Literary Techniques and Effects to Empower "Babylon"

The main linguistic reason that "Babylon" grew so powerful is the characteristic of Hebrew metaphors. Some metaphors can easily be combined, weaving a web of images that enables a biblical author/redactor to mention just one image and allude to all of them. One example is the previously mentioned group of motifs concerning drunkenness and delirium (Jer 51:39, 57; Isa 47:15), drinking the cup (of wrath, Jer 51:7, 25, 15–29) and treading grapes (Jer 25:30, 51:14). War is like working at the wine press; the conquering aggressors sing songs of the grape harvest (Jer 51:14). Another example is harvest in general: harvesters are annihilated (Jer 50:16); war is like winnowing (Jer 51:2) in that a site will be "mowed down" (Jer 51:62). "Babylon" threshed Israel (Isa 21:10) and will itself be stamped down like a threshing floor (Jer 51:33).

What is more, metaphors are juxtaposed so that their images influence each other, leading, in some cases, to an existing metaphor becoming the basis of a

new metaphor. For example, in Jer 51:7–8, Babel is a golden cup in YHWH's hand (51:7), but suddenly, Babel is fallen and destroyed; "take balm for her pain, perhaps she may be healed" (51:8). The metaphor of a vessel is dropped. Brokenness becomes injury, and "Babylon" the cup suddenly turns into a hurt woman. Another example is the lament of a resident (of) Zion in Jer 51:34–35. These two verses contain a hierarchy of metaphors in a system that is both closed and open. "Babylon's" identity is defragmented by multiple identities. All these forms of verbal variation and concretization link, merge, systematize and complement in texts where "Babylon" is construed in biblical memory. In the end, these images form a complete Otherworld—what we find in apocryphal texts and the New Testament.

This image of "Babylon" constitutes its own system whose elements and conjunctions are well defined, although variable. Readers and speakers have only one option in response: they can privilege certain details or stress others. One can even deny "Babylon"—but that will not let it be forgotten, to the contrary. The fictive "Babylon" is so real that it is impossible to make it disappear.³⁴

"Babylon" is expanded and reshaped in the course of the revising and editing of texts that eventually become the Hebrew Bible. As a result, it becomes more and more independent. Increasingly, "Babylon" comes to dominate certain subject areas so that everyone who deals with one of them is forced to react to "Babylon" in some way. The areas that "Babylon" occupies, like city, wickedness, civilization, language, women, splendor, decadence, hegemony, to name a few, are part of nearly every Semitic or Indo-European culture. For this reason, the image of "Babylon" is apt to be integrated easily into other cultures, revitalizing "Babylon" again and again.

Summarizing the Process: How to Divinize "Babylon"

Quantify. Imagine "Babylon's" destruction many times. Effect: "Babylon's" imaginative power grows quantitatively.

Create a web of linked images. Compare "Babylon's" imagined destruction to every imagined destruction of a city, a region and a woman you know (such as Edom, Assur, Jezebel, and so on). What they have or are "Babylon" has or is even more. Effect: "Babylon's" image is connected with images whose destruction share the same metaphorical world.

Eternalize. Let "Babylon" be a symbol for "eternal" problems such as civilization, urbanism, self-reliant women, and power-hungry rulers. Effect: "Babylon" lives as long as you do, and beyond.

Demonize. Intensify "Babylon's" evilness until only YHWH himself can defeat it. Effect: "Babylon's" power grows qualitatively.

34. Juan Benet, *Der Turmbau zu Babel: Essay* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994) 50.

Integrate. Add “Babylon” to your religious system of symbols³⁵ and link it with other constituent elements, making it the opposite counterpart to Jerusalem and the opponent of YHWH. Effect: “Babylon’s” position in your religious system of symbols rises to be near or next to YHWH.

Adjust. Whenever something historical happens to Babylon, integrate it into your literary and religious image of “Babylon.” Effect: More quantification, creation, eternalization, demonization, and integration.

“Babylon” will never cease to exist because its destruction is forever near.

35. Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana, 1993) 87–125 (p. 91).

Building Castles on the Shifting Sands of Memory: From Dystopian to Utopian Views of Jerusalem in the Persian Period

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How could a small group of people, descendants of Judeans taken into exile by the Babylonians some 70 years prior, have returned to their ancestral land and managed through the sheer force of will and imagination to turn reality on its head and forge from that imagination a cohesive and lasting collective identity? Their ancestral land had been reduced to a tiny province on the periphery of the Persian Empire, comprising Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings; a fraction of the former Kingdom of Judah, with its entire southern part gone. Throughout the Persian period (539–332 B.C.E.) Jerusalem most likely was “nothing to write home about” for those who actually lived there—which is, of course, exactly what *did* happen: not the real city, but the one of constructed memory and imagination would be the subject of song and story. Many recent studies highlight how insignificant both Yehud and the city of Jerusalem were, in all probability.¹ That does not mean that its inhabitants were not thinking about their new situation and dreaming big dreams that transcended those limited borders and their lack of autonomy.

In a recent article, I undertook a comparative lexical analysis of Lamentations 2 and Psalm 24 and was able to demonstrate a close relationship between the two, in the sense that they function as each other’s mirror image.² Lamentations decries the disintegration of the city, the breaking down of her walls and ramparts, and the sinking into the ground of her gates; all this by the hand of the divine, with the result that the enemy could walk into the city and despoil the sanctuary and the population. In Psalm 24, on the other hand, this is turned

Author’s note: I want to thank the critical readers of earlier drafts of this essay who offered helpful comments: Sara Parks, Eva Mroczek, Shlomo Mahn, my husband, Jules, who had to read all the versions, and especially the editors, Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman, who provided many invaluable comments and suggestions.

1. Israel Finkelstein, “The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods,” *RB* 117 (2010) 39–54.

2. Carla Sulzbach, “Of Gates in the Ground and Castles in the Air: A Case of Biblical Unreal Estate,” *SJOT* 26 (2012) 266–88.

on its head, and instead of being dead, dark, and sunken, the gates and turrets are told to raise themselves up ever so high to allow entry to the victorious deity. Instead of slain inhabitants, we find a selection process at work of who is allowed to enter the “Mountain of the Lord” to keep the profane out of the sacred environs.

Without drawing any conclusions about cross-fertilization or dates of composition, it is clear that these two texts present a reversal of a number of very common mythic motifs with regard to Jerusalem and the temple. These concern, in particular, the gates and walls, those architectural features that deal specifically with allowing and denying access. Their very functionality and their literal rise and fall are described as being subject to the whims of the divine. In the present essay, I will consider how this reversal may contribute to our understanding of Jerusalem as a site of memory and see how it may have been meaningful, particularly in the Persian period.

It may be suggested that within the small Persian province of Yehud, with a wider reach to *golah*-communities within the larger empire, the memory blocks contained in these two texts, and others similar to them, would have served a renewed urgency of identity formation, stabilization of the community, and (re-)organization of the cult. Lamentations 2 confronts the reader with the raw facts of destruction. This is all that the text wants to convey: the incredible sense of loss, which is compared to a universal destruction with no hope for a restoration of the prior conditions. In addition, an accusing finger is pointed at the deity who was supposed to protect the city. The mythic motifs serve to emphasize this universal sense of despair. Reading this text evokes images of bent-over, ghostlike beings wandering aimlessly among the ruins of what was once their home. It has been noted that the classical Mesopotamian city lament uses very similar terminology, although it is fairly certain that the known examples do not actually describe a real calamity.³ Although their depictions are instructive, in the case of Lamentations, the text is intimately and indubitably to be associated with a historical destruction of Jerusalem.

In Psalm 24, on the other hand, a different voice speaks. The tone is not just upbeat; it is triumphant, if not outright overflowing with grandeur. The author either knows nothing of any destruction, any threat to his secure existence, or

3. See, for instance, R. Mark Shipp, *Of Dead Kings and Dirges: Myth and Meaning in Isaiah 14:4b–21* (Academia Biblica 11; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 47–49 and literature cited there; Diana Edelman, “The ‘Empty Land’ as a Motif in City Laments,” in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography = L’historiographie biblique, ancienne et moderne* (ed. George J. Brooke and Thomas Römer; Leuven: Leuven University Press 2007) 127–49; Nili Samet, “Sumerian City Laments and the Book of Lamentations: Toward a Comparative Theological Study,” *Shenaton le-Mikra ule-heker ha-mizrah ha-kadum* 21 (2012) 95–110 [Hebrew]; contra Jack M. Sasson, “Utopian and Dystopian Images in Mari Prophetic Texts,” in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2006) 27–40, esp. p. 31 n. 11.

he is in denial!⁴ In fact, the psalm offers an almost ironic reversal of the misery by depicting a deity who is fully in charge of an ordered and tranquil world.

I will not dwell on theory in this essay as others have done so expertly elsewhere in this volume. Instead, the focus will be on the specific role that cultural or collective memory⁵ might have played in the production or later use of these texts in the Persian period. To achieve this goal, I will look at how these newly formed, multifarious images, which ultimately are based on the physical reality of a real city, may result in new depression or, alternatively, overconfidence, when a wished-for ideal is tried to be turned into physical reality. This process can be further illustrated by the concepts of utopia and dystopia.⁶

Occasionally, one sees books or exhibits with titles something like *Demolished Amsterdam: 104 Disappeared Buildings and Cityscapes*.⁷ This is not quite the same as collections that depict cityscapes in, say, the turn of the 20th century or in the 1950s. While the illustrations may be similar, the first carries a certain willful destruction or erasure, whereas the latter is more concerned with a sense of nostalgia. Other works deal with cityscapes that were once planned but never implemented: "The City That Never Was but Could Have Been."⁸ Here the reader is treated to carefully executed plans for new buildings or whole neighborhoods, either on virgin soil or at the expense of existing architecture, and we get a sense of wonder about what kind of life would have been sustained by these unrealized visions.

Our two texts hover in between these options. They drift from "what was" to "what could have been" to "what should have been" and "what would have been (if)." With this, "what actually happened" becomes irrelevant and even

4. For the various views on the compositional date of this psalm, as well as the consequences for each in a joint reading with Lamentations 2, see my "Gates," 271, 281.

5. On the uses of the terms *collective*, *cultural*, and *social memory*, see Ehud Ben Zvi, "On Social Memory and Identity Formation in Late Persian Yehud: A Historian's Viewpoint with a Focus on Prophetic Literature, Chronicles and the Deuteronomistic Historical Collection," in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (ed. Louis Jonker; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 95–148; idem, "Remembering the Prophets through the Reading and Rereading of a Collection of Prophetic Books in Yehud: Methodological Considerations and Explorations," in *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 17–44.

6. For the application of utopia and dystopia to biblical studies, see Ehud Ben Zvi, ed., *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2006).

7. Onno Boers, *Afgebroken Amsterdam, 104 verdwenen gebouwen en stadsgezichten* (Amsterdam: van Gennep, 1984).

8. See B. Waldman, "The New York City That Never Was, part 1: Buildings" (June 6, 2011) in *Untapped Cities: Urban Discovery from a New York Perspective* [accessed August 1, 2014]. On-line: <http://untappedcities.com/newyork/2011/06/06/the-new-york-city-that-never-was-part-i-buildings/>.

undesired. It is a manipulation of memory; not a total fabrication, but a desired revision of a foundation in reality, yet newly built up. We will see that some of the relevant texts that deal with building accounts or human-divine-architectural interactions remain firmly locked within the texts that recount them. By way of illustration, whereas Psalm 48 proudly proclaims a golden reality as it projects a secure and ultimate restoration, it still needs to urge the addressees to make a mental map of an obviously restored Jerusalem in order to recount it to the following generations. The relevant passages read:

(vv. 2–4) Great is the Lord and much acclaimed, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, Mount Zion, summit of Zaphon: the city of the Great King. Through its citadels, God has made himself known as a fortress . . . (v. 9) As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of YHWH of Hosts, in the city of our God. God makes her secure forever . . . (vv. 12–14) Let Mount Zion rejoice! Let the villages of Judah exult, because of your judgments. Walk around Zion, circle her, count her towers, take note of her ramparts, view her citadels, *that you may tell of them to a future generation.*

Does this act of remembering and particularly the italic text convey, at some level, that Jerusalem's utopian future expectation is *not* secure? Significantly, in Isa 62:6–7, in the midst of a utopian picture of future redemption, this call to remember is taken a notch further and it is suggested that, over and above the future generations that need reminding, it is God himself who needs to be reminded of his promises: "Upon your walls I have set watchmen, O Jerusalem, who shall never be silent, by day or by night: O you, *who remind* [הַמְזַכְּרִים] the Lord, take no rest, and give no rest to him, until he establishes Jerusalem and makes her a praise in the earth."

A similar sentiment is evident when Nehemiah feels compelled to *remind* God of the poor state of society, as though he would not know.⁹ At the conclusion of his prayer (9:36–37), Nehemiah reminds God that the people are not free under Persian rule, decrying the decrepit situation of the *golah* community: "Here we [are], servants today! And the land that you gave to our fathers, to eat its fruit and its bounty, here we [are], servants in it; and it yields much increase to the kings you have set over us, because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies and our cattle at their pleasure; and we [are] in great distress." This is preceded by a listing of the sins that had led to the destruction, in other words, the outcome of what is written in Lamentations 2. From Nehemiah's outcry it is clear that the restoration was far from complete and the conditions sketched in Psalm 24 are perhaps in the future, but for now most certainly restricted to the imagination.

9. See Nehemia Polen, "God's Memory," in *Obligated by Memory: Literature, Religion, Ethics. A Collection of Essays in Honor of Elie Wiesel's Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Steven T. Katz and Alan Rose; Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006) 139–53.

Destroyed cities do not have memories, but they contain the building blocks for memoirs, poetry, and reconstruction/restoration. In a way, when the components that make up the memories of cities are translated into text, they resemble a tell ready for verbal archaeology. This “verbal” archaeology, with the intent of mining urban mythic motifs, plays a similar role to that of physical archaeological excavations for nationalisms in modern times.¹⁰ The motifs/memories are created, organized, used and reused, reformatted, and reapplied over and over. Some are partly or wholly old memories, others are freshly created, but all are constructed and solidified once they have become a text. The specific building blocks considered here are the mythic motifs connected with the architecture of city and temple, especially in their interplay with the divine forces.

A prerequisite for a city to become fully infused with the divine essence and to interact with it is a further stage in the mythicization process; namely, its (female) personification. For Jerusalem, this meant its transformation into a living female entity, Bat Zion.¹¹ Only as personified Bat Zion can she remember—the physical city of stone cannot. In Lam 1:7, it is poignantly recounted that now in her days of sorrow, she ‘remembers’ (זכרה) all the precious things she had. The chapter continues her recounting of the destruction as it was executed, step by painful step, and she does so in mournful remorse. Adding insult to injury, in 2:1, the response of the deity is a cynical dismissal of Bat Zion with a prosaic statement that he ‘did not remember’ (ולא-זכר) his footstool when he destroyed it. The footstool here is a description for the temple and, by extension, the city as a whole. The irony is that Bat Zion remembers herself; the Lord does not remember her.

Nonpersonified, destroyed cities cannot remember, but they are remembered. But, who remembers Jerusalem? Of course, in the first place, her displaced inhabitants do. For instance, in Ps 137:1, their lament for their absence from, and the destruction of, their beloved city is captured in a sigh of remembrance. Jer 51:50 urges the exiled people to remember Jerusalem, but it does not elaborate on *what* was to be remembered. We are left to guess. This is not the case in Psalm 48, as shown already above. The psalm asks the hearers to encircle the city, count its towers, note its ramparts, and go through its citadels. The purpose is to create an organized memory of the urban spaces so that the hearers may tell future generations of the city. It is worth noting that in all these poetic and/or prophetic descriptions, the focus is on the public spaces of the city’s defense works, its temple, and its palaces. The domestic spaces

10. Philip L. Kohl, Mara Kozelsky, and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, eds., *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

11. That is, ‘daughter (of) Zion’. For the most recent treatment of this image, see Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher, eds., *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (SBLAIL 13; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012).

and urban arteries such as streets and squares are hardly, if at all, touched on, with the exception of Lam 2:11–12, 19, 21 where, in the absence of the deity, they have become a place of death. Purely utopian texts, such as Psalm 24, are mostly focused on a reconstituted sacred space at the expense of the lived spaces of the actual city dwellers.¹²

In order to understand the dynamics of the textual memory of Jerusalem during the Persian period better, it is helpful to consider alternating views that represent three main categories: dystopian, utopian, and realistic.¹³ I associate the first two with mythic motifs that are found mostly in the mental space where the extradimensional divine and three-dimensional human realms meet. In other words, the divine and human realms merge.¹⁴ Recently J. Cataldo has contributed to the study of utopia in relation to Yehud. He proposes that “the *golah* community exerted itself to construct utopia within a (perceived) dystopic situation and thereby restructure the (objective) power relations within the province. This utopia, as the vision of it heralds, was a perfect theocracy.”¹⁵ I agree with Cataldo’s position on what constitutes a utopia in this context: Ezra–Nehemiah indeed constructed a vision of a theocratic utopia. But there is more. The dystopic antithesis was not just the undesirable society that the *golah*-community encountered in real life¹⁶ but also the stark opposite of its dreamed-up ideal. This is its mirror image, the consequence of reverting back to the behavior that was blamed for causing the destruction and the deity’s leaving in the first place.

Lamentations 2 turns the cosmicizing metaphors, well-known from other cities considered cosmic centers, such as Babylon, squarely on their heads.¹⁷

12. Contrast with Neh 7:3–4. In v. 3, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are told they should keep watch over the gates, everyone over his own house; v. 4 states that “the city was wide and large; but the people in it were few, and the houses were not built.”

13. “Realistic” for lack of a better term.

14. For a slightly different taxonomy of urban views, see my “From Urban Nightmares to Dream Cities: Revealing the Apocalyptic Cityscape,” in *Constructions of Space*, vol. 5: *Place, Space and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (ed. Christl M. Maier and Gert Prinsloo; London: T. & T. Clark, 2013) 226–43.

15. Jeremiah Cataldo, “Whispered Utopia: Dreams, Agendas and Theocratic Aspiration in Yehud,” *SJOT* 24/1 (2010) 53–70, esp. p. 54.

16. *Ibid.*, 55.

17. In a paper entitled “City Parody as a Literary Trope in Biblical Texts” presented at the conference *The City in the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, UK, in April 2011), I discussed cities that in the mythology of their inhabitants became cosmic centers/centers of the universe, with a special link to the respective deities and their ability to link the human and divine realms. There I suggest,

for the text to have Jerusalem successfully mimic and virtually take over the place and role of Babylon, it first needs to become a cosmic, divinely founded capital, eclipsing all other cities. Since this entire undertaking occurs within a narrative universe, within a text rather than in fact and on the ground, the phasing out of other major cities takes place by simply writing them out of the storyline;

They become failed metaphors. They usually communicate strength, power, and invincibility, but here they are used in reference to a fallen, crumbled, and darkened city. The text is very generous in its description of the urban standard motifs necessary to describe a living, bustling, human city. In fact, it does not neglect to mention its divine coinhabitant but stresses that he now has become the enemy of both the city and its human population. But what about Psalm 24? It gives no attention whatsoever to what is behind the gates. Only the deity (re)enters after presumably having returned from a mission.

Although Lamentations 2 references a catastrophe that actually happened, its presentation is mythic. The lament genre by definition creates a deeply dystopian view of the space it describes. The mythic motifs consist of the personified architecture and the anthropomorphic characteristics of the deity, which interplay and become dependent, while relegating the people to a shadowy place at the back of the stage. An exilic text bearing eerie resemblances to our chapter, displaying similar violence and the same bloody fate of Jerusalem and her inhabitants, is found in Ezekiel 16, which offers a gruesome depiction of the devastation of Jerusalem. Like Lamentations 2, it too tries to make sense of the catastrophe. But whereas the latter lays the blame squarely on God and absolves Jerusalem and her inhabitants, in Ezekiel 16 there is only one guilty party, Bat Zion/Jerusalem, who brought the destruction upon herself. She is openly accused of being unfaithful to God, of spurning the divine lover and his law and whoring after other powers. The contrast between Ezekiel 16 and Lamentations 2 is as blatant as their similarity of language. The theology of the Ezekiel chapter, however, is closer to the restoration program of Ezra.

Ezekiel's harsh denunciation is absent from Lamentations 2. Unlike the other chapters of Lamentations, chap. 2 is ambiguous in assigning guilt and does not say straight out that the law was not kept. In fact, by destroying the sanctuary, God is held liable for effectively having ended the cult (2:6–7). In addition, 2:9 focuses on the notion that the leaders responsible for the dissemination of the law and the prophets were either exiled or made ineffective by the deity. It seems to me that this refers to those who were, in fact, serving the deity in earnest and not the false prophets who are mentioned in v. 14.¹⁸

a literary act of erasure. The phasing out of other cities is closely connected with their perceived tolerating of pagan cults. Thus, we see Jerusalem's foregrounding as the singular holy capital of the religious universe that is biblical Judah, with Israel's God as supreme Deity. Soon after its inception, this religio-literary universe came to encompass the entire earth, as is befitting a universal deity, seemingly in a not so pious imitation of Babylon's cosmos, resulting in cities becoming deities or women and gods marrying cities.

This manner of thinking possibly set in during the Exile, but most strongly came to the fore during the Persian period. In fact, Psalm 24 echoes much of the equation of the Mountain of the Lord with the whole earth under divine domination.

18. There is, in fact, an uncanny similarity with a passage in the much later Syriac Apocalypse of 2 Baruch where, on the eve of the destruction, the deity orders Baruch

Psalm 24, being a reversal of Lamentations 2, is both mythic and utopic, displaying at the same time a remembered and a projected golden past. The mythic motifs are similar to those of Lamentations, but here the human players are brought forward, even if equally subject to the divine will. Moreover, whereas the text in Lamentations communicates widespread and nondiscriminating destruction, in Psalm 24 we see a built up and walled holy precinct, entrance to which is limited to those who are eligible to be in the vicinity of the divine. In mundane thinking, this disqualifies most people.¹⁹ One remaining question, however, is which exceptional humans are sufficiently worthy and pure to enter the divine abode and are they actually allowed to stay or are only allowed a visit?

In my earlier study, I made a connection to the politics of exclusion attributed to Ezra and observed that a theocracy can never be a democracy; however, a theocracy is exactly what the postexilic community would have become had Ezra's exclusivist demographic policies actually been realized in full.²⁰ In the projected visionary restoration of Ezra and the other *golah* leaders, only Judeans who had gone through the purification of the exile were fit to reenter the land and reestablish a relationship with the divine. Having been purged of their sinful behavior, and conscious of their obligation not to stray from the path of the law again, they projected all the former sins onto the population that had stayed behind.

Many of the vices of idolatry and intermarriage with strangers of which the "remainees" are accused were probably the norm rather than the exception, and the rigorous reform proposed by the *golah* leadership was an innovation grounded in their experiences in Babylonia. There is historical evidence for just this sort of well-functioning (even if "sinful") society during the Persian period, albeit in Egypt and not in Yehud. It concerns the colony in Elephantine

and his associates to leave Jerusalem, because the city could not be destroyed with righteousness present! 2 Bar 2:1–2 reads: "For I have said these things to you that you may bid Jeremiah, and all those that are like you, to retire from this city. For your works are to this city as a *firm pillar*, and your prayers as a *strong wall*." They are compared to parts of the architecture that are vital to keep the city safe: firm foundations and a protective wall. This suggests that the righteous element is equated with the divine presence in the city, both of which need to depart. This is contrary to Abraham's plea for Sodom, expecting the city to be preserved if even only 10 righteous persons are found (Gen 18:32). This is suggestive of the notion that in the minds of the *golah* literati, no more tolerance was allowed for an admixture of people of righteous and dubious natures within the city confines of Jerusalem.

19. Psalm 15 displays additional criteria for entry.

20. Sulzbach, "Gates in the Ground," 282. It is not known to what extent this program may actually have been implemented, but it was central in the minds of those who were responsible for the texts that propagate these policies and certainly met with opposition, which was likely one of the contributing factors to the rise of factionalism that became full blown in the Hellenistic period. See further Cataldo's study.

tine, a military outpost of the Persian Empire in Egypt, from which a sizeable archive with correspondence in Aramaic has been preserved. This collection is important for a number of reasons; not least for being the sole extrabiblical evidence we have for a functioning priesthood in a reconstituted Jerusalem temple in the 5th century B.C.E. Furthermore, it shows that the population was of a mixed Judean, Aramean, and Egyptian background, the cult was syncretistic, and it was deemed perfectly normal by the leaders of this community to petition the religious authorities in both Jerusalem and Samaria to sway the Persian authorities for permission to have their local sanctuary rebuilt, which had been destroyed by local Egyptians.²¹ However, from Babylonia too, we have firsthand knowledge of the presence of those descendants of Judean exiles who chose to remain there. In particular, the Murashu archive, representing business transactions of an important firm in 5th century Nippur and the collection from Al-Yahudu from the Borsippa region (572–484 B.C.E.) shed light on the life of Judean communities in southern Babylonia during the Persian period. Unlike the Elephantine texts, these tablets do not reveal anything about the religious life of these communities. However, based on the onomastics, which show a frequent appearance of mixed Babylonian and Judean theophoric names within various families, it is very clear that the level of acculturation and assimilation, if not even intermarriage, was immense. To this may be added the invocation of Babylonian deities in accordance with scribal convention in some of the marriage contracts.²² All this must have been a thorn in the side of the *golah* leaders. However, any knowledge of these “others” is relegated to the “bad example file” or even systematically “forgotten.” Clearly, the real people from Al-Yahudu and Elephantine would not have met the criteria for entering the holy precinct as laid out in Psalms 15 or 24 or the standards set by the program

21. Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968) 284–98. The actual documents (Cowley 30, 31, 32) can be found in Bezalel Porten and Jonas C. Greenfield, *Jews of Elephantine and Arameans of Syene: Aramaic Texts with Translation* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University–Department of the History of the Jewish People, 1980) 90–100.

22. See especially the recent studies by Laurie Pearce, “New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia,” in *Judah and Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 399–411; idem, “‘Judean’: A Special Status in Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Babylonia?” in *The Judeans in the Achaemenid Age: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 267–77; Kathleen Abrahams, “West Semitic and Judeans Brides in Cuneiform Sources from the 6th Century B.C.E.: New Evidence from a Marriage Contract from Al-Yahudu,” *AJO* 51 (2005–2006) 198–219; and idem, “The Reconstruction of Jewish Communities in the Persian Empire: The Al-Yahudu Clay Tablets,” in *Light and Shadows—The Catalog—The Story of Iran and the Jews* (ed. Hagai Segev and Asaf Schor; Tel Aviv: Beit Hatfutsot, 2011) 261–64 (English; 33–35, Hebrew).

laid out in Ezra and Nehemiah. This certainly pertains to many of the inhabitants of Yehud itself. Rather, these kinds of real communities, not reflected in the “utopian” texts, are equated with those who are blamed for the conditions of the past destruction described in Lamentations 2. Accepting them as part of the renewed community could lead to new calamities, and they are therefore erased from the “reality” that characterized the mindset of the *golah* literati and religious leadership.²³

Instead, we are presented with a picture that *could* be true, and if we solely had the text to rely on and our willingness to *believe* it, it *could* be true. But cracks have appeared in the factuality of the textual edifice. An important case in point is the so-called Nehemiah memoir. It seems to portray a first-person, realistic, and down-to-earth description of Nehemiah’s building activities in Jerusalem. His most credited act is his restoration of Jerusalem’s walls and gates, and this architectural feat is therefore known as “the wall of Nehemiah.” Lately, doubt has been cast on the historicity of this account, and it is questioned whether there even was a “wall of Nehemiah” at all—at least in the time of his presumed activity. The main obstacle to the account’s accuracy comes from the latest archaeological findings (or lack thereof).²⁴ I. Finkelstein is of the opinion that the walls that have been found in Jerusalem, which had been accepted as Nehemiah’s, in reality date to the Hasmonean period.²⁵ What are we left with then? Has the entire text of Nehemiah been rendered worthless? Not quite. However, the value is found not on the surface of the text but between the lines. Because here, too, we recognize some of the common elements shared with other texts—both mythical and not—that display an urgent interest in the architectural wholeness and well-being of Jerusalem and its temple.

In rereading Nehemiah’s building account, Cataldo aptly suggests, “material and metaphorical walls symbolize for the Persian-period Hebrew texts the social-religious-political division of the people in Yehud. This division, which is itself descriptively utopian, is symbolized by the construction of Jerusalem’s walls.”²⁶ As noted above concerning the jubilant wall in Psalm 24, here, too, there is a context of walling in the sacred and separating it from the profane. Not only are they portrayed as defensive walls in a military and political sense,

23. Or, as Cataldo points out, citing Mannheim, “A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs” (“Whispered Utopia,” 59).

24. Israel Finkelstein, “Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah,” *JSOT* 32 (2008) 501–20 (p. 509).

25. This view is criticized, by, among others, David Ussishkin, “On Nehemiah’s City Wall and the Size of Jerusalem during the Persian Period: An Archaeologist’s View,” in *New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation* (ed. Isaac Kalimi; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012) 101–30. Oded Lipschits argues for the authenticity of the building account in Nehemiah 3 (“Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition, and Purpose,” in *ibid.*, 73–99).

26. Cataldo, “Whispered Utopia,” 64.

but also in a religious sense. Psalm 24 is clearly mythical, whereas Nehemiah can be read as a “realistic” building account, although there is a convergence. Reading Psalm 24 raises, however, the question of whether it was sufficient within the narrow context of the society of Persian Jerusalem to imagine a rebuilt wall when seeing the destroyed remnants and remembering or imagining its former glory.

How much historical truth is contained in other texts calling to mind architectural spaces? The accounts of the decoration of Solomon’s temple in 1 Kings 6–7 and 2 Chronicles, for instance, conflict with each other. D. Edelman proposes that “it is reasonable to assume that the Chronicler’s account reflects the decoration in a phase of the post-exilic temple, which has been retrojected to the monarchic-era temple to standardize the decoration over time and suggest continuity between the temples.”²⁷ In any case, even if the portrayal would be factual, it is still part of an idealized site of memory.²⁸ The same holds true for the building account in Ezra 1–6, which “portrays an idealized past, or an idealized site of memory, perhaps, for its intended audience. In either case, it is not reporting or conveying past reality.”²⁹ These observations apply to all other biblical as well as postbiblical building accounts: from Ezekiel’s visionary temple to the *Temple Scroll* or the *New Jerusalem Text* from Qumran. They remain firmly anchored in a text, and all “build” on the same memory template.

All these considerations lead us back to the question what the people were asked to remember. Was it the same golden past as the one Bat Zion was accused of having forgotten in Ezekiel 16, followed by a virtual textual rape of the city in her female guise? Was it the historically destroyed city, laid waste by the Babylonians? Or, could it have been the peaceful normalcy that Zech 8:2–9 is promising will return? Verses 4–5, which so strongly contrast with Lam 2:10 and 11b, proclaim: “Thus says the Lord of hosts: old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.”³⁰

27. Diana Edelman, “What Can We Know about the Persian Era Temple in Jerusalem?” in *Temple Building and Temple Cult, Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.): Proceedings of a Conference on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Biblical Archaeology at the University of Tübingen (28–30 May 2010)* (ed. Jens Kamlah; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012) 343–68, esp. p. 351.

28. Or a “verbal icon,” as suggested by Clifford M. McCormick in *Palace and Temple: A Study of Architectural and Verbal Icons* (BZAW 313; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) *passim*. “Verbal icon” is a useful way to understand realized/unrealized/idealized, but most of all, literary, building accounts. See as well, Steven S. Tuell, “Ezekiel 40–42 as Verbal Icon,” *CBQ* 58 (1996) 649–64.

29. Edelman, “What Can We Know,” 346.

30. For a discussion of this passage in the context of constructed memory, cities, and utopias, see my “Urban Nightmares,” 237.

What might the relevance of all these images be for the reality of Yehud during the Persian period? I would suggest that the answer lies in the (re-)creation of a coherent past in order to secure a future.³¹ Moreover, such textualized memories forge an identity beyond the borders of Yehud, reaching out to Diaspora communities. With a homeland that was radically reduced in size, a monarchy lost, a temple that had lost the grandeur of its predecessor, and a city that was badly in need of repair, the only places that allowed for limitless expansion and glory were the textualized memories, both authentic and fabricated,³² with a hope that perhaps in some future time they could be realized on the ground once more—or for the first time.

Conclusion

Through the use, reuse, and manipulation of especially standardized architectural motifs, an image of Jerusalem and the temple is created that far exceeds any resemblance to historical reality. Through the creative use of these shared, remembered and memorized elements, a fictive reality emerges that allows its users to identify with the created image as well as with each other. We have a community with an identity that is lodged in a text that paints its own reality. Because this picture tallies neither with the material real past nor the real present, there is only one direction to go: the future. Of course, the question remains whether the implementation of a society based on one group's "remembrance" of a utopian golden past, be it theocratic or not, is desirable, but that is a different issue that cannot be discussed here.

31. On the role in nation and identity formation of the "golden past" that becomes a present ideal to be pursued and subsequently a (hoped for) golden future, see Anthony D. Smith, "The Resurgence of Nationalism? Myth and Memory in the Renewal of Nations," in *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 253–81, especially the section "Ethno-History and the Golden Age," 261–66 (previously published in the *British Journal of Sociology* 47/4 [1996] 575–98).

32. Another way to understand the working of unsubstantiated memory is to recognize it as "counterfactual memory," or the creation of alternate histories. In these cases there is a clear purpose in that the rewritten past can assist in gaining a different perspective on the present, or even alter it in certain ways. See Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Voice and Role of a Counterfactual Memory in the Construction of Exile and Return: Considering Jeremiah 40:7–12," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 169–88.

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Memory *and* *the City in* Ancient Israel

Ancient cities served as the actual, worldly landscape populated by “material” sites of memory. Some of these sites were personal and others were directly and intentionally involved in the shaping of a collective social memory, such as palaces, temples, inscriptions, walls, and gates. Many cities were also sites of social memory in a very different way. Like Babylon, Nineveh, or Jerusalem, they served as ciphers that activated and communicated various mnemonic worlds as they integrated multiple images, remembered events, and provided a variety of meanings in diverse ancient communities.

Memory and the City in Ancient Israel contributes to the study of social memory in ancient Israel in the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods by exploring “the city,” both urban spaces and urban centers. It opens with a study that compares basic conceptualizing tendencies of cities in Mesopotamia with their counterparts in ancient Israel. Its essays then explore memories of gates, domestic spaces, threshing floors, palaces, city gardens and parks, natural and “domesticated” water in urban settings, cisterns, and wells. Finally, the studies turn to particular cities of memory in ancient Israel: Jerusalem, Samaria, Shechem, Mizpah, Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon. The volume, which emerged from meetings of the European Association of Biblical Studies, includes the work of Stéphanie Anthonioz, Yairah Amit, Ehud Ben Zvi, Kåre Berge, Diana Edelman, Hadi Ghantous, Anne Katrine Gudme, Philippe Guillaume, Russell Hobson, Steven W. Holloway, Francis Landy, Daniel Pioske, Ulrike Sals, Carla Sulzbach, Karolien Vermeulen, and Carey Walsh.

Cover design: ANDY KERR

Fractal art: SVEN GEIER



Eisenbrauns

POB 275

Winona Lake, IN 46590

www.eisenbrauns.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-57506-315-7



90000

9 781575 063157